Italian Orientalism

Nationhood, Cosmopolitanism and the Cultural Politics of Identity

Fabrizio De Donno

Open Access

PETER LANG

Fabrizio De Donno

ITALIAN ORIENTALISM

Nationhood, Cosmopolitanism and the Cultural Politics of Identity

Creative Commons

Serie: Italian Modernities (33)
Editor: Peter Lang Ltd, International Academic Publishers
Edition: 2019
ISBN-10: 1788740181
ISBN-13: 978-1788740180

Introduction

Italian Orientalist scholar Francesco Gabrieli – Professor of Arabic at Rome University – wrote an article in 1965 entitled 'Apology for Orientalism',[1] in which he defended the European Orientalist enterprise and stressed the relevance of Orientalist scholarship to European culture and civilisation. Gabrieli's article was a response to another essay by Egyptian sociologist Anouar Abdel-Malek entitled 'Orientalism in Crisis'[2] (1963), which, more than a decade earlier than Edward Said's publication of *Orientalism* (1978), had already raised concerns about Orientalism's entanglement with imperialism, racism and Eurocentrism. In his piece, Abdel-Malek mapped the systematic way modern Western nations had developed a network of Orientalist institutions, learned societies and university chairs throughout Europe and the United States, while also pointing out that such practice had emerged out of the study of classical antiquity through the science of philology and the historical method. Interestingly, Abdel-Malek makes particular mention of Italian Orientalism under fascist disctator Benito Mussolini in order to address how such study had been accompanied by humiliation and occupation.[3] Gabrieli responded by referring to Abdel-Malek's claims as the East's attempt 'to make of European orientalism a scapegoat for its [the East's] own problems, anxieties and pains'. While there were no doubt agents of colonial penetration among Orientalists – Gabrieli forcefully

1 Francesco Gabrieli, 'Apology for Orientalism', first published in *Diogenes*, No. 50, Summer, 1965, pp. 128–36. Re-published in A. L. Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 79–88. I make reference to the latter publication in this book.

2 Anouar Abdel-Malek, 'Orientalism in Crisis', first published in *Diogenes*, No. 44, Winter 1963, pp. 104–12. Republished in Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader*, pp. 47–56. I make reference to the latter publication in this book.

3 Abdel-Malek, 'Orientalism in Crisis', pp. 50–3.

argued – there were many others whose interest was exclusively 'scientific'. Among these Orientalists, Gabrieli mentions the Italian orientalist Leone Catani who, for instance, was against the Italian colonisation of Libya.[4] Furthermore, in defence of the claims of Eurocentrism and of West-centred interpretations of world history, Gabrieli maintains that it was the West that developed ideas of history, science, evolution, and the spiritual heritage of mankind, and made a contribution to human thought in modern times; and in this sense, it had every right to retain a West-centred vision.[5]

Both Gabrieli's and Abdel-Malek's articles are now part of a reader of the most significant writings on Orientalism, A. L. Macfie's *Orientalism: A Reader* (2000), published when, in the aftermath of Said's *Orientalism*, the topic established itself as a major contemporary debate.[6] It is to a certain extent surprising to note that both articles make particular mention of Italian Orientalism and that, even more startling, it was an Italian belated Orientalist, of all European Orientalists, to feel the need to legitimise the Western Orientalist enterprise so stubbornly and polemically. Indeed, it is not far-fetched to say that Gabrieli's article and general view of Orientalism made their part in triggering Said's writing of *Orientalism*. Was Italian Orientalism, then, a cultural phenomenon as harmless and uncontroversial, or anti-colonial as in the case of Caetani, and *legitimately* ethnocentric as Gabrieli claims it to be in relation to Orientalism at large?

This book attempts to reconstruct the modern Italian cultural engagement with European Orientalism and the Orient. It focuses on a central aspect in the cultural and intellectual history of Western and Italian Orientalism: the emergence and impact of the discipline of Indology and the way in which it gave way to a revival of the European interest in the Orient, and to the cultural politics of Indo-European identity in relation to European nationalisms. Raymond Schwab, in his famous book, *La renaissance orientale* (1950), has described the enthusiasm of nineteenth-century Europeans for all things Indian. More specifically, Schwab writes

4 Gabrieli, 'Apology for Orientalism', p. 81.
5 Gabrieli, 'Apology for Orientalism', pp. 83, 84.
6 See Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader*.

of the revival of Oriental Studies in Europe which followed the 'discovery' of Sanskrit manuscripts in India at the end of the eighteenth century – especially through the figure of British Orientalist Sir William Jones – and describes how such discovery brought to light the affinities between Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, and the modern languages of Europe, and paved the way for the study of a new 'Indo-European' civilisation. The new discoveries led to a new interpretation of the history of civilisation, and especially of European civilisation, which was now said to have had its origins in ancient India. Schwab's focus is primarily on how the European discovery of Indian antiquity became associated with Orientalist philology and European Romanticism, giving way to a general revival of the category of the 'Orient' at large, and bringing forth the idea of a new and truly universal humanism which moved beyond classical antiquity and the Mediterranean. Indeed, the Indic discoveries for Schwab gave way to what he has called a European 'Oriental renaissance', or 'the revival of an atmosphere in the nineteenth century brought about by the arrival of Sanskrit texts in Europe', which Schwab compares to the Italian Renaissance in that it 'produced an effect equal to that produced in the fifteenth century by the arrival of Greek manuscripts and Byzantine commentators after the fall of Costantinople'.[7] Schwab refers in passing to Italian Indological figures such as Angelo De Gubernatis, as well as the Piedmontese Gaspare Gorresio, as the Italian representatives of this new scholarship. However, he primarily focuses on British, French, German and Russian Orientalism and discusses how 'the Romanticism of 1820' that it inspired 'was, like the Humanism of 1520, a Renaissance'.[8] So how did the land of the Classical Renaissance react to this second Oriental renaissance?

Italian Orientalism aims to explore the impact of this Oriental renaissance in Italy over two significant moments: the pre-unification

7 Raymond Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984[1950]), p. 11.

8 Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 15. Schwab here quotes in English from: Camille Jullian, *Questions historiques. De l'influence de l'Egypte sur le monde antique* (Paris: Imprimerie de E. Capiomont, n.d.), p. 15.

period, shaped by the Italian national movement of independence – the Risorgimento – examined in Part I; and the post-unification moment spanning the liberal and fascist periods, in Part II. Such division is helpful as the different nationalist concerns of the two moments are reflected in the different significance acquired by Orientalism and the Orient in Italian nationalist discourse between Risorgimento and fascism. Risorgimento Italy's engagement with Orientalism, for instance, occurred within the framework of Italian discussions of independence, nationhood and modernity, and its cosmopolitanism reflected the more libertarian and emancipatory concerns of the period. On the other hand, with the development of a more aggressive nationalism in the post-unification years, the cosmopolitan dimension of Orientalism was more concerned with the definition of an Italian racial identity and debates around colonial expansionism, as well as with the process of secularisation and modernisation according to European standards. In fascist Italy, moreover, the relationship between Orientalism and national empowerment took on new extreme connotations through propaganda about empire, foreign policy and racialism. The emphasis on the different forms of Italian engagement with European Orientalism over the two parts of the book (which are nevertheless inextricably linked and illustrative of continuity as well), therefore, is useful as it reveals, through the overarching lenses of Orientalism, the 'evolution' of Italian nationalism and cosmopolitanism from emancipation to oppression in the cultural politics of Italian identity.

During the Risorgimento period, literary figures and intellectuals such as Giovanni Berchet and Ludovico Di Breme engaged with the general revival of the Orient as a category relevant to European culture, especially as an alternative to classical antiquity in discussions of modernity. Though Indic Orientalism had provided the greatest impulse in the Oriental renaissance, it was Jones' work and legacy – as the embodiment of the transition from an older form of Oriental Studies to the new modern and 'scientific' pan-European Orientalism – that proved influential in Italy, especially due to the impact they had already had on European Romanticism. Italian Romantics like Berchet and Di Breme dealt with the Orient in the context of a Romantic nationalism in which Orientalism functioned as an anti-Classicist tool in debates about national emancipation, European identity,

aesthetic innovation and modern nationhood in Italy. In this context, it was not only India the focus of interest, but also other Oriental areas such as Ottoman Greece and the Islamic Orient at large – cultural areas which, together with Arabia, Persia and the Far East, had been revived by the Oriental renaissance and the impulse provided by Indology. Giacomo Leopardi, too, especially in his dispute with Di Breme, engaged with the new trend in the context of the quarrel between Classicists and Romantics. However, Leopardi's engagement was ambivalent, and despite his early rejections of Orientalism on the grounds that it was irrelevant to Italian identity, in time he subverted Romantic Orientalism and developed his own hybrid and existentialist form of Neoclassical-Romantic Orientalism in his protest against modernity and the meaninglessness of life. Moreover, during this first phase of reception, Italian intellectuals such as Gian Domenico Romagnosi and Carlo Cattaneo engaged with Indic Orientalism and the Indo-European concept in order to discuss notions of political freedom, national regeneration and world civilisation. They assessed the value and relevance of Indian civilisation to debates on the rebirth of Italian civilisation and European modernity, and rejected the Oriental renaissance as irrelevant in the land of the Classical Renaissance. Crucially, it is in the Risorgimento period that the first Italian chair of Indology was established in Turin with Gaspare Gorresio, which is the event that marked the birth of the new modern professional Italian Orientalism, or *orientalistica*.

After unification, and even more so after the beginning of the Italian colonial campaign in the 1880s, *orientalistica* witnessed fast growth on the model of the professional Orientalism of other European nations. It is at this stage that Orientalism's enmeshment with Eurocentrism and racialism became more marked. Italian Orientalist scholarship developed in various fields – in conjunction with positivism and historicism first, and idealism afterwards – from Indology, comparative philology and mythology to linguistics, ethnology, and colonial scholarship (represented by figures such as Gaspare Gorresio, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, Angelo De Gubernatis, Michele Kerbaker, Giacomo Lignana, Domenico Pezzi and Francesco Lorenzo Pullè). Other Orientalist fields that were revived by Indology and the new Indo-European or 'Aryan' concept ranged from Islamic Studies (Italo Pizzi and Carlo Alfonso Nallino), to Sinology (Carlo Puini), Turkology (Ettore

Rossi), and Coptic Studies (Carlo Conti Rossini and Enrico Cerulli). Many of the Orientalists in Islamic and Coptic studies also wrote on law and ethnology in relation to the Italian colonies, while the whole discipline of Orientalism impacted on anthropology, craniology and criminology (through figures such as Cesare Lombroso and Giuseppe Sergi). Finally, fascism developed its own distinctive propagandistic style of Orientalist scholarship (Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, Carlo Formichi and Giuseppe Tucci), which was used to support fascist ideology, as well as foreign and colonial policies, and racial thought, sometimes serving anti-racism and sometimes racism, and culminating in racial legislation in the late 1930s.

In conjunction with this scholarly revival of Orientalism, a number of the most significant post-unification Italian writers showed an interest in popular and literary forms of Orientalism, and often these included travel writing and popular novels.[9] India and Indology continued to prove

9 Among the most widely read Italian writers of the time was the 'phenomenon' Emilio Salgari, whose work was translated into several languages, and whose adventure and children's novels were set in faraway lands, from India and Malaysia to the Caribbean, Africa and the American 'Far West'. These novels often betray sympathy for oppressed people, especially those under British rule, although they at times also replicate many of the stereotypes associated with Eurocentrism – an ambivalence in keeping with the aspirations of a new European nation that had emerged from foreign oppression only to aspire to become a colonial power. Salgari's exoticism and Orientalism have been discussed in Arnaldo Di Benedetto, ed., *La Geografia immaginaria di Emilio Salgari* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012). Salgari's novels include examples such as *I pirati della Malesia* (1896), *Le due tigri* (1904) and *Il bramino dell'Assam* (1911), to mention just a few. Similarly, Classicist writers operating between or across the liberal and fascist periods, such as Gabriele D'Annunzio and Giovanni Pascoli, wrote works that celebrated Italian colonialism in Africa, and in particular Libya, which was bombastically compared to ancient Roman expansionism. See, for example, Gabriele D'Annunzio, *Le laudi* (1903–14), *Più che l'amore* (1906), and Giovanni Pascoli, *La proletaria si è mossa* (1911). Other examples include the travel writing of Edmondo De Amicis on Morocco and Turkey, although he also wrote about his travels in other parts of the world, from South America to northern Europe, including Holland, Paris and London. De Amicis was a major turn-of-the-century Italian writer who, among other things, wrote novels and is the author of the famous children book *Cuore* (1886), but was also a prolific travel writer, and among his works of travel literature are *Costantinopoli* (1878) and

inspirational and had an impact on popular, realist and modernist authors such as Anton Giulio Barilli, Giosuè Carducci, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti and Guido Gozzano. These authors often used the Orient as a platform to discuss Italian national rebirth and racial identity, as well as historical process and degeneration, colonial desire and imperial fantasies – especially in the context of British imperialism, which remained the ultimate colonial model for liberal Italy, before fascist Italy developed anti-British attitudes. These authors often drew on academic Orientalism in order to craft their own literary representations, thus contributing to the already strong link between professional and literary Orientalism.

The belatedness of modern Italian Orientalism meant that it borrowed heavily from British, French and German Orientalism. In this sense, instead of setting trends, it copied them. However, by contrast, the early modern Italian states had pioneered the European cultural engagement with the Orient, and post-unification Italian Orientalists in particular took pride in this early modern legacy. Orientalists such as Angelo De Gubernatis played on this long tradition of 'Italian' study of the Orient in order to establish a 'primacy' for Italy and legitimise the renewed interest in the modern Orientalist enterprise.[10] If such a tradition dated back to Marco Polo's *Il milione* (1300), it was during the Renaissance that the

---

Marocco (1876). Italian writers of the fascist and post-war period, such as Riccardo Bacchelli, narrated Italy's ventures in Africa in relation to colonial expansionism through novels like *Mal d'Africa*, published in 1935 but narrating the events of the 1870s and 1880s. Ennio Flaiano, whose *Tempo di uccidere* was published in 1947, dealt with the Italian conquest of Ethiopia in 1935. The two latter novels are the only (critical) literary accounts of Italian colonialism, but the fascist period saw the growth of propaganda novels and travel writing, which dealt with colonialism as well as other aspects of fascist ideology and foreign policy. Examples include the work of authors such as Guido Milanesi, Arnaldo Cipolla, Luciano Zoccoli and Orio Vergani. See Giovanna Tomasello, *La letteratura coloniale italiana dalle avanguardie al fascismo* (Palermo: Sellerio, 1984), Charles Burdett, *Journeys through Fascism: Italian Travel Writing between the Wars* (New York: Berghan Books, 2007) and Rosetta Giuliani Caponetto, *Fascist Hybridities: Representations of Racial Mixing and Diaspora Cultures under Mussolini* (New York: Palgrave, 2015).

10 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des études orientales en Italie* (Paris: Leroux, 1876). See also Kim M. Phillips, *Before Orientalism: Asian Peoples*

Italian states produced a vast amount of literature on the Orient, whether travel literature or other. Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, for instance, enjoyed a great deal of attention in theatre, from Niccolò Macchiavelli *La mandragola* (1518) to Gian Battista Della Porta's *La turca* (1606) and Carlo Goldoni's *L'impresario della Smirne* (1759). Egypt was the object of study of Renaissance works such as Marsilio Ficino's *Corpus Hermeticum* (1471) and Pico della Mirandola's *Conclusioni* (1486–7).[11] Generally speaking, in particular in Pico's *Conclusioni*, there is an attempt to demonstrate that paganism, Christianity, Judaism and Islam shared the same spiritual truths, thus laying emphasis on the Mediterranean links of these theologies.[12] China was the topic of Jesuit authors such as Matteo Ripa and Matteo Ricci,[13] whose *Mappamondo* (1584) was highly celebrated in China itself, while the Indian peninsula was narrated by several Jesuit travellers including Roberto De Nobili, Marco della Tomba, Filippo Sassetti and Pietro della Valle.[14] Moreover, De Gubernatis was particularly keen to stress that Hebrew had been studied in the Italian peninsula since the times of the Romans, whereas Arabic and Turkish had been studied in the early modern Italian city-states which entertained several relations with Islamic states.[15] According to the Orientalist, the first chairs of Arabic and Hebrew in the Italian peninsula were established by Raimondo De Pennaforte, the master

---

and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).

11 See Frances Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979).

12 See Frank Manuel, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 40. Susanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Scholarship, Religion and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 4

13 See Mary Laven, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011). See also, David Mungello, *The Great Encounter: China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

14 See Ines G. Zupanov, *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-century India* (New Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1999) and Meera Juncu, *India in the Italian Renaissance: Visions of a Contemporary Pagan World, 1300-1600* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016).

15 De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, p. 18–19.

of the Dominican Order, in Dominican convents around 1260.[16] However, the University of Bologna, Europe's first university, as well as that of Rome, established chairs of Arabic, Chaldean and Hebrew with the decree of the Vienna Council in 1311.[17] De Gubernatis lists all the most important grammar books of these languages published since then in the Italian peninsula, either in Latin or Italian, particularly during the Renaissance, and goes on to give an account of the establishment of other chairs in the following centuries in a number of universities, such as Siena, Padua and Palermo, and religious institutions such as Catholic seminars, throughout the Italian peninsula until the time of writing.[18] It is in the light of this long tradition that modern Italy, for De Gubernatis, should resume its central role in the European cultural engagement with the Orient.

As Amedeo Maiello has argued, in fact, modern Italian Orientalism, and Indology in particular, were 'a valid means with which to bolster national prestige and to upgrade Italian culture to European standards.[19] Although Maiello refers in particular to post-unification Orientalism, it is my argument in this book that Orientalism between Risorgimento and fascism served primarily the purpose of identity politics. During the Risorgimento, Orientalism attracted attention due to its popularity in Europe, but many Italian intellectuals rejected it in place of the more 'significant' classical identity associated with Classicism. At the same time, those authors that embraced Orientalism, especially in their Romantic nationalism, embraced a cultural identity that defined both Europeans and Orientals through a stark East-West divide. As Barbara Spackman has recently argued in her analysis of the fluid identities in narratives by Italian

16 De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, p. 25.

17 De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, p. 26.

18 De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, p. 26–43.

19 Amedeo Maiello, 'In Search of the Modern Brahmins: De Gubernatis' 1904 Visit to America', in Maurizio Taddei and Antonio Sorrentino, eds, *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, 4 vols (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1995–2001), iv, pp. 353–498 (p. 397). This volume concentrates on the scholarly profile of De Gubernatis, his vast production, multidisciplinary interests and international networks, especially through archival and epistolary sources. Crucially, it also makes links between De Gubernatis and authors such as Carducci.

travellers to the Ottoman lands, Orientalism played with and created 'identity' for both Europeans and Orientals as its discourse 'shaped not only those it "Orientalised", but also those who it "Westernised" and "Europeanised"'.[20] With the post-unification development of Italian Orientalism, the process of Italian identity-construction through Aryanism reached new racial heights. De Gubernatis, for instance, claimed to have travelled to India to experience first hand Italy's roots in India and belonging to the family of Indo-European or Aryan peoples.[21] He writes of how he wished to hear Sankrit being spoken by Indians themselves, and to witness the performance of all the 'Aryan' rites and ceremonies he had been reading about in the publications of his fellow European Orientalists. He declares his Aryanness thus:

> Ario anch'io, ed italiano per giunta; ossia nato di un popolo nel quale, come nel greco e nell'indiano, Dio volle stampata un' orma più profonda del genio ario, iniziato, dai miei giovani anni, alla conoscenza della più pura, della più antica e perfetta tra le lingue ariane, curioso indagatore della molta vita ideale che si cela e palpita in quel nobilissimo linguaggio, ero tormentato da un lungo e inquieto desiderio di sentirlo parlare nell'India stessa, di vedere fino a che punto gli antichi riti religiosi, le antiche credenze e consuetudini davano ancora forma e carattere all'odierna vita indiana; e

20 Barbara Spackman, *Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travellers in Ottoman Lands* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2017), p. 4.

21 The 'Indo-European' or 'Aryan' idea addressed notions of inclusion and exclusion as regards questions of origins, identity, civilisation, religion, nationalism and empire. Born in the Orientalist world of eighteenth-century imperial Britain, the 'Indo-European' concept was initially used to create a link of kinship between the British and the Indians. The term 'Indo-European' became 'Indo-Germanic' in Germany in the early nineteenth century, and then 'Aryan' from the 1850s in the whole of Western Europe, thanks to Max Müller, Ernest Renan and Arthur De Gobineau. The three Orientalists, although in different ways, became responsible for the association between language, race and blood, as well as for the general distinction between white Aryans on the one hand, and non-white, non-Aryan Semites, Hamites and Mongolians on the other. See Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 184; Tzvetan Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism and Exoticism in French Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994), pp. 106–14, 144; Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 184.

> finalmente, mi pungeva il desiderio di ritentare le prime sedi di quegli Arii pastori guerrieri e poeti per vedere in mezzo a qual natura … si manifestò da prima il genio lirico della nostra famiglia ariana.
>
> [I am Aryan, and also Italian; that is, born of a people on whom, as in the Greek and the Indian, God wanted the deepest imprint of Aryan genius. Initiated, since my early years, into the knowledge of the purest, the most ancient and perfect among the Aryan languages [Sanskrit], and as a curious investigator of much of the ideal life which is concealed and palpitates in that most noble language, I longed to hear it spoken in India itself. I wanted to see to what extent the ancient rites, beliefs and customs still gave form and character to contemporary Indian life. And finally, I wished to visit the first settlements of those Aryan shepherds, warriors and poets; I wished to see amongst what nature … there originated the lyrical genius of our Aryan family.][22]

If De Gubernatis inaugurated a tradition of Italian Aryanism, however, such tradition was, to say the least, ambivalent. European Aryan narratives of European evolution, especially in German Orientalism, had often discussed modern Italy and its Latin heritage in terms of degeneration. While anthropologists such as Giuseppe Sergi responded to this rhetoric and went on to develop an anti-Orientalist racial theory of Eurafricanism or Mediterraneanism, Aryanism continued to be in use and eventually came to underpin fascist racial theory and legislation in Italy and the Italian empire.

The ambiguities of Italian Orientalism also extend to its relationship with colonialism as denounced by Said. As is well known, Said examined the ways in which Orientalist scholarship, and philology in particular, became the epistemological archive for the Western domestication of the Orient throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, especially in relation to European colonialism. While drawing on Antonio Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony and Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, Said defines Orientalism as a style of thought which, by means of different disciplines, reconstructs the Orient with 'representations framed by a whole set of forces' that bring it 'into Western learning, Western consciousness, and later, Western Empire.'[23] The scholarship on the cultural phenomenon

22 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane: India centrale* (Florence: Niccolai, 1886–7), p. 7.

23 Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 2003 [1978]), pp. 202–3.

of modern Orientalism produced since Said's *Orientalism* has concluded that, while the link between Orientalism and Western imperialism is undeniable, the domestication of the Orient as a trope is not as monolithic as Said suggested, and, together with colonialism and racism, served other political, intellectual and aesthetic purposes relating for instance to notions of identity, spiritual renewal, and cosmopolitanism, both in the East and the West.[24] Certainly, in the field of Indology, Italian Orientalism was more concerned with the construction of the Aryan identity of the Italian people than with Italian colonialism. Filipa Lowndes Vicente – who has explored the world of Florentine Indology through the international networks of De Gubernatis, his work as the organiser of Orientalist Congresses in Italy, Indian exhibitions in Italy, as well as his work in India, especially in relation to his collaboration with the Indian scholar Joseph Gerson Da Cunha – has addressed Italian Indology as an 'Other' form of Orientalism precisely for not bearing an immediate relation to European (British, Portuguese or Italian) colonialism, thus raising questions about Said's thesis.[25] However, as this study aims to make clear, Indology's emphasis on Aryanism meant that Eurocentrism and racialism were an intrinsic part of any discussion of India and the Orient at large, not just of Italy or Europe. These discussions would almost inevitably take place in some colonial context, European or Italian. Controversially, however, Aryanism was also challenged through Eurafricanism in Italy, but they were both used in colonial discourse. The relationship between Italian professional Orientalism and Italian colonialism, though still predominantly understudied, has begun to be studied by Karla Mallette with particular reference to the figure of Enrico Cerulli, an expert on the Horn of Africa. What is idyosincratic about Cerulli,

24 The impact and reactions to Said's argument are summarised in Macfie's *Orientalism: A Reader*, but a number of recent works have continued to criticise the value of Said's thesis. See for instance: Robert Irwin, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2006); Ibn Warraq, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's* Orientalism (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007) and Daniel Martin Varisco, *Reorienting Orientalism: Said and Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

25 Filipa Lowndes Vicente's *Altri orientalismi: l'India a Firenze*, 1860–1900 (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2012).

according to Mallette, is that he combined the skills of the unscrupulous colonial administrator with the competence of the scrupulous Orientalist scholar, complicating even further the Saidian notion of Orientalism.[26]

A major concern in this book is the relationship between professional and literary Orientalism. Such a link is crucial as Orientalist scholarship studied and made references to literary works from and about the Orient. It is this link between scholarship and literature that gave way to the European 'Oriental tale' and Orientalist aesthetic. It is my aim, therefore, to explore the way in which professional Orientalists and literary authors were in dialogue. The Italian pensinsula did not, of course, witness the same extent of development of literary Orientalism in Europe – from the eighteenth-century 'Oriental tale' through to the early twentieth-century modernist avatars, in the colonial novel, travel writing, the adventure novel, the romance novel and poetry in general.[27] Inevitably, Italian literary Orientalism has received none of the critical attention produced since

26 Karla Mallette, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Towards a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010). Other figures that seem to contradict Said's theory and that have received attention by both Mallette and Roberto Dainotto include the Islamist Michele Amari. Both Mallette and Dainotto argue that Amari claimed a place for Islamic Mediterranean civilisation in European modernity, to the extent that, as he appeared to go against the more common Orientalist tendency to discriminate against the Arabic contribution to European modernity, Mallette calls Amari's form of Orientalism a sort of 'counter-Orientalism'. See also Roberto Dainotto, *Europe (In Theory)* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

27 See, for instance, Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1991); Ali Behdad, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1994); Hsu-Ming Teo, *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012); Andrew C. Long, *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014). As is well known, British, French and German writers developed a substantial tradition of literary Orientalism which, among its many exponents, boasts the likes of Rudyard Kipling, E. M. Foster, Herman Hesse, Thomas Mann, Edward Lane, Richard Burton, Wilfried Scawen Blunt, Lady Anne Blunt, Harriet Martineau, Goethe, E. T. A. Hoffman, François-René de Chateaubriand, Lord Byron, Alphonse de Lamartine, Gérard de Nerval, Benjamin Disraeli, and Gustave Flaubert.

Said's book in relation to Britain and France, which led the way due to their imperial campaigns in Africa and Asia, or to Germany, which quickly caught up as a result of a sensational growth in Orientalist philology, as well as Romantic and modernist aesthetics.[28] However, the body of critical studies on Italian colonial culture and literary Orientalism has in recent years grown.[29] Guido Gozzano's representations of India have been the

28 See Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004); Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*; Debra Prager, *Orienting the Self: The German Literary Encounter with the Eastern Other* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014); Nicholas Germana, *The Anxiety of Autonomy and the Aesthetics of German Orientalism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017); Joanna Neilly, *E. T. A. Hoffman's Orient* (Oxford: Legenda, 2016).

29 See Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan, eds, *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005); Ruth Ben-Ghiat and Mia Fuller, eds, *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave, 2005); Fabrizio De Donno and Neelam Srivastava, eds, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Italy', Special Issue, *Interventions: International Journal of Post-colonial Studies*, 8.3 (2006); Cristina Lombardi-Diop and Caterina Romeo, ed., *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* (New York: Palgrave, 2012) and Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Italian Fascism's Empire Cinema* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015). Together with Mallette's *European Modernity and the arab Mediterranean*, see Andrea Celli, *Dante e l'Oriente: Le fonti islamiche nella storiografia novecentesca* (Rome: Carroci, 2013). Both works analyse Cerulli's *Il 'Libro della Scala' e la questione delle fonti arabo-spagnole della 'Divina Commedia'* (1949). A broader approach to the relationship between Dante and the Orient is offered by another volume, Brenda Deen Shildgen's *Dante and the Orient* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). See also Francesco Gabrieli, *Dante e l'Oriente* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1921). The relative broadness and variety of Italian professional and creative Orientalism is testified by two other volumes: Rossana Bossaglia's *Gli orientalisti italiani: cent'anni di esotismo* (1998) and *Orientalismi italiani* (2012), edited by Gabriele Proglio. The first volume gives a fascinating and revealing account of the considerable production of Orientalist painting in Italy and establishes a number of connections between French and Italian Orientalist painters, while making brief references to links between Italian literature and opera. The second work contains some excellent contributions spanning photography, travel narratives of explorers, professional Orientalism, colonial scholarship, literary Orientalism, missionary Orientalism and colonial and postcolonial literature. See Gabriele Proglio, *Orientalismi italiani* (Alba: Antares, 2012), 3

subject of a recent study by Cristina Della Colletta, for instance, who links Gozzano's imaginative depictions of India to the Turin World Exhibition of 1911 in particular.[30] In Chapter 7, I build on Della Coletta's study of the aesthetics of Gozzano's travel writings on India and the Turin exhibition, in order to show the relevance of the tradition of Indic Orientalism to Gozzano's work, especially since the World Exhibitions were themselves a product of European professional and literary Orientalism. I also build on Giuliana Benvenuti's study of Italian travel writing on India, and I am especially interested in how she draws attention to the hybrid nature of such literature, which resides between fiction and journalism.[31]

While focusing on India in particular, but also touching on other regions of the Orient whenever necessary, my intention is to explore how the concept of the 'Orient' and Aryanism became powerful tropes which, together with Greece and Rome, as well as Classicism and Mediterraneanism, were used to discuss Italian routes to modernity in the cultural politics of European identity. In this sense, the division of the book into two parts will make more evident how the chiefly *cultural* European identity cultivated by Risorgimento Orientalism eventually turns into a *racial* European identity in post-unification Orientalism. Similarly, the tendency to hierarchise languages, literatures and religions through ethnology also becomes more marked in post-unification Orientalism. It is, therefore, a multifaceted approach to Italian Orientalism that I adopt, while building on Said. My study, in short, intends to show that the Orient, in modern Italy, represented a trope that took on different meanings and was not merely related

---

vols, and Rossana Bossaglia, *Gli orientalisti italiani: cento anni di esotismo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998).

30 Cristina Della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style: The Great Exhibitions in Turin and Their Narratives, 1860–1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).

31 Angelo Pellegrino, *Verso Oriente: Viaggi e letteraura degli scrittori italiani nei paesi orientali (1912–1982)* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 1985); Giuliana Benvenuti, *Il viaggiatore come autore. L'India nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008); Attilio Brilli, *Il viaggio in Oriente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009); Luca Clerici, ed., *Scrittori italiani di viaggio 1700–1861* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008), and Luca Clerici, ed., *Scrittori italiani di viaggio 1861–2000* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013).

to colonial conquest, though the relationship between Orientalism and colonialism existed. My focus is more on the link between Orientalism and nationalism, whether libertarian or expansionist, which remained strong in Italy from Risorgimento to fascism.

The first chapter deals with the birth of modern European Orientalism and introduces the pan-European dimension of the phenomenon, and its aesthetic and philosophical questions. It addresses the central role played by Sir William Jones, whose work proved influential in Italy, while exploring the establishment of the first chair of Indology in Turin in the 1850s. The chapter considers how Orientalism, the Orient and Indian civilisation in particular became central in Gian Domenico Romagnosi's and Carlo Cattaneo's discussions of world civilisation, and in more general debates on political and aesthetic renewal, namely the Classicist-Romantic quarrel. It also examines Orientalism's role in reinforcing a demarcation, already established during the Enlightenment, between southern and northern Europe.

The second chapter analyses how Italian Romantics such as Giovanni Berchet and Ludovico Di Breme embraced European Romantic Orientalism, and the figures of Lord Byron and William Jones in particular, in the Romantic manifestos they penned (respectively, '*Sul drama indiano*: La Sacontala (1818), and *Osservazioni*: Il Giaurro: *Frammento di novella turca* (1818)). It focuses on how these Italian Romantics criticised a stagnant Italian Classicism, and how the Italian Classicists, in turn, rejected Orientalism in light of its anti-Classicist slant. The chapter goes on to demonstrate how Italian Romantics engaged in discourses of European identity formation, and developed a Romantic nationalism through a literary Orientalism which betrayed a form both of cosmopolitanism and Eurocentrism from the European margins.

The third chapter deals with Giacomo Leopardi's responses to Orientalism. It explores Leopardi's early nationalist phase in which he engaged in Italian identity construction through the lenses of an anti-Romantic and anti-Orientalist Classicism. It then goes on to show the way he appropriated Romantic Orientalism, and re-defined its poetics by emptying it of sacredness and filling it with a corporeal experience of life and death, giving way to a form of nihilistic Orientalism. I map the stages of Leopardi's reaction to Romanticism by tracing the early anti-Romantic and

anti-Orientalist stance in the *Discorso di un italiano sulla poesia romantica* (1818) in conjunction with his early Classicist identity-formation process, up until his subversion of Romantic Orientalism. I then explore how he moved away from nationalism, with the culmination of his existentialist Orientalism in 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia' (1830), through which he attacks European modernity at large.

The fourth chapter deals with the development of academic Orientalism in unified Italy. It focuses on the main figures in this field of scholarship, especially on the Florentine cultural scene and at the *Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento*, where Orientalism played a central role. The chapter examines the development of academic Orientalism in the philosophical context of positivism. It considers how Italian Orientalists followed European Orientalism by creating a new Indo-European or Aryan historicity based on comparative philology and mythology, which gave Christianity and classical antiquity Indian origins in place of the already established Semitic roots, thus giving rise to a rhetoric of anti-Semitism. The chapter considers how Italian professional Orientalists, in contrast to German Orientalists, eventually sought to reconcile Orientalism with Classicism in order to restore Rome's centrality in 'Indo-European' civilisation.

The fifth chapter shows how a 'science of religion' and a 'science of race' emerged out of a 'science of language'. The chapter explores how Orientalist ideas migrated from comparative philology and comparative religion to other contiguous academic fields, such as ethnology, anthropology, craniology and criminology. It focuses in particular on how each discipline appropriated the Indo-European concept with its own individual slant in order to address hierarchies of identity in relation to concepts of northernness and southernness, but also Aryanness, Blackness, Jewishness and Italianness in the wider context of Europeanness and Westernness. The chapter pays particular attention to one crucial outcome of the turn-of-the-century debates on Aryanism, that is, the challenge of the Indo-European idea through the coining of an 'Eurafrican' or 'Mediterranean' alternative concept. Another aspect of such a discussion of identity politics is the development of a colonial strand of Orientalism in relation both to Islamic Studies and Libya, as well as Coptic Studies and the Horn of

Africa, which was indeed based on philology and its links with cultural, racial and religious themes.

The sixth chapter examines the emergence of positivist fictions of Indic Orientalism. It looks at the ways in which late nineteenth-century writers experimented with different genres and forms as they engaged with representations of themes and ideas put forward by Indology. It also points to the way in which Italian representations of British India served the purpose of depicting Europe's leading imperial power as the ultimate model for the Italian fantasy of empire. The focus of the chapter is on Anton Giulio Barrili's romance novel *Il tesoro di Golconda* (1879) and Giosuè Carducci's naturalist poem 'All'Aurora' (1881). It argues that these works approached notions of Vedism and Indo-Europeanism from a historicist perspective in order to discuss political decline and national rebirth, as well as racial identity, imperial desire and escapist mysticism, in relation to post-unification Italy's new bourgeoise aspirations as a newly constituted European nation.

The seventh chapter considers Guido Gozzano's modernist travel writing *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India, 1912–1914* (1917). It examines Gozzano's engagement with the (Italian and European) tradition of Indic Orientalism, and the ways in which the poet hoped to put his own anti-positivistic stamp on it. The chapter briefly surveys the idealist climate of early twentieth-century Italy out of which Gozzano's work emerged, and explores a number of anti-historicist pieces of literary and popular Orientalism, with figures such as Giovanni Papini and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. It then moves on to put De Gubernatis' historicist travel narrative *Peregrinazioni indiane* (1886–7) – one of Gozzano's sources – in dialogue with Gozzano's anti-historicist Indian letters. While the chapter argues that Gozzano dealt with the same Orientalist themes of Aryanism, Euromania and imperial desire as his positivist and idealist predecessors, it also considers his existentialist depiction of British India, where the poet's pilgrimage to the cradle of the world is rendered as a subjective nightmare, while imperial Britain continues to constitute the ultimate Italian fantasy and model of empire.

The epilogue explores the legacies of Orientalism and Aryanism in fascist discourses on nation, race and empire. It looks at various aspects of fascist ideology and policies through the lenses of Orientalist ideas and

fields, from religion and spirituality, to race and politics. It addresses the scholarship on Buddhism and its links with idealism and concepts of the fascist state, as well as the ethnological discussions of race that proved influential in racist and anti-racist fascist attitudes. It considers examples of Orientalist scholarship that supported fascist anti-British propaganda in British India, and colonial ideology in the fascist empire, as well as the gradual development of a racial doctrine that appropriated Orientalist sources to legitimate racist legislation both in Italy and in the empire.

Although the book is primarily concerned with the manifestation of the phenomenon of Orientalism in Italy, inevitably it also attempts to map the relationships that Italian Orientalism established with other national expressions of Western Orientalism. The discussion of the Orient in a given Western culture reveals that culture's anxieties and concerns, as well as indicating the place and status of that national culture in the Western world. In this book, I aim to show both the domestic and international dimensions of Italian Orientalism by exploring the links between the historical and cultural predicaments of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Italy on the one hand, and Orientalism as a pan-European phenomenon of global dimensions on the other. Thus, my examination of Italian Orientalism is primarily a study of Italy via Europe and the Orient.

PART I

The Reception of the Oriental Renaissance in Risorgimento Italy

CHAPTER 1

Orientalism versus Classicism? Debating 'Europeanness' in Risorgimento Discourse

During the early nineteenth century, in the midst of the Italian struggle for national independence and unification known as the Risorgimento, Italian intellectuals and writers found themselves grappling with a new cultural, aesthetic and academic trend that was evoking curiosity and enthusiasm throughout Europe, and particularly in Britain, France and the German states: the trend of Orientalism, or the European cultural engagement with the 'Orient'. The new concept of an Indo-European family of languages had established the Indian linguistic, cultural and ethnic origins of Europe – including classical antiquity – and changed forever the notion of (pan-)European identity or 'Europeanness'. At the same time, this discovery brought about new understandings of the history of civilisation and revolutionised the European conceptions of the Orient at large, and not just India. Risorgimento Italians received European Orientalism with ambiguity due to their strong and dominant Classicist tradition, but Orientalism soon provided an alternative way of meditating on the place and identity of the new Italy in modern Europe. As a result of this effort, however, the engagement with Orientalism, no less than Classicism, involved a form of Eurocentrism – a Eurocentrism from the margins – through which Risorgimento Italians expressed their aspirations to modern European nationhood, but also their anxieties about Italy being both the cradle of European civilisation and its modern periphery.

The Orientalist scholars that exercised the greatest influence on Risorgimento intellectuals were Sir William Jones and Friedrich Schleghel, and the general impact of European Orientalism on Risorgimento discourse, often coupled with Johann Gottfried Herder's thought, can be seen in three distinct areas of Risorgimento culture: in philosophical historicism, with the impact of the Indo-European concept on Italian theorisations of world

incivilimento, or the civilising process;[1] in the scientific advancement of professional Orientalism, with the birth of an Italian expression of Indology in the 1840s and the establishment of modern *orientalistica*; and in aesthetics, with the role of Orientalism in debates about Romantic nationalism, the Classicist-Romantic quarrel and cultural renewal in Italy. What these areas shared were debates on modernity, nationhood and Europeanness, as well as assessments on the value of the 'Orient' (and India in particular) and 'classical antiquity' as civilisational and aesthetic categories. In this chapter, I outline the main intellectual and cultural contexts of the so-called Oriental renaissance, and how it came to interact with Risorgimento culture and discourse. More specifically, I look at the way in which some key figures including thinkers such as Giandomenico Romagnosi and Carlo Catttaneo, philologists such as Gaspare Gorresio, as well as a number of the most prominent Classicist and Romantic writers of the time, engaged with the new Orientalist trend – especially with Jones' philological work on Eastern poetry and Indian drama, and the German Romantic aesthetics and thought it inspired – and discussed Risorgimento aspirations by means of identity politics through a new dialectic between Orientalism and Classicism which was the prime result of the Oriental renaissance.

A sceptical reception? Orientalism and the Indo-European concept in Risorgimento Italy

In order to better grasp the dynamics of the Risorgimento reception of European Orientalism and the gradual emergence of multidisciplinary expressions of Italian Orientalism from the 1830s onwards – which I

1 The term *incivilimento* literally means 'civilising process', but it was primarily used by Risorgimento thinkers, and in particular by Giandomenico Romagnosi and Carlo Cattaneo, to refer to notions of progress and social life. Generally speaking, particularly among Risorgimento thinkers, it was widely believed that civilisational progress was crucial to find the suitable form of social life for the new united Italy.

consider as the foundation of the post-unification developments of Italian Orientalism explored in Part II – it is useful to provide some background to the work of Jones and some of the other related key figures. Jones established himself as the most prominent figure of modern European Orientalism from the 1770s onwards as a result of his publications on Persian grammar, as well as on Arabic, Persian and Turkish poetry, on a codification of both Eastern and Western poetry, and, most importantly, for his groundbreaking work on Sanskrit language and literature. This body of works is central to the general revival of Oriental studies at the turn of the eighteenth century which Schwab has called the Oriental renaissance. It is important to stress that, while the discovery of Sanskrit manuscripts and the new significance of India remained the greatest impulse behind this revival, it is the European conceptions of the Orient at large that acquired a new dimension and meaning in European culture and thought. While my general focus in this book remains on India and the Indo-European concept, in Part I, I also touch on other Oriental areas when assessing the impact of the new European Orientalism on Risorgimento Italy.

Jones's Sanskrit Studies really took off when he founded the Asiatic Society in Calcutta together with other scholars such as Charles Wilkins, Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Horace Wilson. The publications produced by the Asiatic Society – the *Asiatick Researches: Transactions of the Society* – sparked the European enthusiasm for India and Indology, as well as comparative philology, mythology and ethnology. It is Jones' work on the linguistic affinities between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin, and the modern languages of Europe, for instance, that first gave rise to the idea of an Indo-European family of languages, cultures and peoples. Jones' Indo-European theory eventually came to shape the history of languages, the development of linguistics and world history, as well as ethnology and anthropology. The study of biblical languages had hitherto kept linguistics attached to theology, but the growth of linguistics through Orientalist and especially Indo-European philology meant that the history of languages, their mythologies and philosophy were freed from their association with religion, thus allowing them to develop into a scientific field of study, in which linguistics, for instance, would be studied by means of references to biology, zoology and geology, and natural history at

large.[2] Moreover, Jones' Indo-European hypotheses gave rise to a new way of assessing issues of origins, not only the origins of man and civilisation, but also national language, character and ethnicity. While such processes owe a debt to Giambattista Vico and his pioneering arguments about the links between the concepts of language and nation, such conceptualisations received a boost from comparative philology's impact on German-speaking intellectuals such as Herder, for whom, as Maurice Olender tells us, 'language is a kind of grid structuring thought and moulding national character', or even a mirror that 'reflects the images that form the soul of a people'.[3] The Indo-European or Aryan idea thus became central to the shaping of nineteenth-century European, and particularly German, debates on the origins of nations, their people, cultures and religions. The comparative element in these assessments had both a nationalist and a cosmopolitan dimension of Europeanness as it sought 'a lost common ancestor for most European tongues'.[4]

One of the aims and challenges of the new Orientalism was, however, to view India in light of the older biblical 'Orientalism'. Jones located India within the genealogical tree of nations found in Genesis – the tree which constitutes what Thomas Trautmann has called 'the Mosaic ethnology'[5] – and devised a theory of legitimacy for India's place in it. The newly discovered civilisation of India – allegedly older than any of the ancient civilisations then known – somehow undermined the biblical accounts of mankind's origins and civilisations and their relationship to the world of classical Greece and Rome. A particularly problematic aspect of the Oriental renaissance, however, was that it had set itself against the Classical Renaissance of early modern Italy. For Schwab, it was with this second renaissance that the world became 'truly round' as 'half the intellectual map is no longer blank'. He deems Marsilio Ficino's humanism 'crippled' when compared to the inclusiveness of the new humanism of Orientalism: while referring to the debate on 'barbarism'

2 Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, pp. 168, 188, 302, 306.

3 Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century,* trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008 [1992]), pp. 4–5.

4 Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, p. 7.

5 Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, pp. 9, 41–61.

and 'primitivism' involving Voltaire, Rousseau, and Diderot, and after them, Herder, Novalis and the Romantics, Schwab claims that from Herodotous to Montaigne, humanity was discussed 'inside a hermetic little Mediterranean room'. Orientalism, as opposed to Classicism, constituted the development of the 'history of languages and history through languages ... which is also ... the beginning of world history'.[6]

In Risorgimento Italy, the Indo-European concept attracted the attention of the most important figures of the time. Intellectuals like Giuseppe Sacchi and Bernandino Biondelli wrote at length on this concept and incorporated it into their work on, respectively, architecture and linguistics.[7] These authors followed their European counterparts in enthusiastically embracing the Indo-European concept in their quest for Italian origins and identity. The discovery of Indian culture had a number of implications for the understanding of the evolution of Italian culture and history. The Italian authors who endorsed the Indo-European concept were, however, in the minority compared to those who criticised it and favoured the celebration of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance. If both Classicism and Orientalism were pan-European phenomena, the former saw Italy at its heart, while the latter was centred around northern Europe and Germany in particular. In the Oriental renaissance and the new notion of Europeanness associated to it, in short, Italy and its classical tradition were pushed to the margins.

An exploration of the pan-European dimension of the Orientalist phenomenon and its intra-European dynamics is useful to understand its Risorgimento reception. It is important to stress that England and France were the birth-places of the Oriental renaissance, but Germany soon became its cradle. British Orientalism had originated in a colonial context and so had direct imperial implications with regard to India; however, the new

6 Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 16–17.

7 See Giuseppe Sacchi, 'Della condizione economica, morale e politica degli italiani nei bassi tempi', in *Antichità romantiche d'Italia* (Milan: Stella, 1828), pp. 1–268. In this work, Sacchi compares the 'sacred' architecture of the Hindus, Greeks and 'Christians' in light of the Indo-European concept (p. 16). See also Bernandino Biondelli, *Studi linguistici* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1856).

Orientalism of Germany, which played no part in ruling India, had a range of distinct aims. As Douglas McGetchin has shown, German intellectuals employed 'Indian material to argue for their own cultural superiority over the Graeco-Roman world and its French inheritors', thus paving the way for the flourishing of the study of Sanskrit in the universities of pre-unification Germany.[8] The domestication of India that followed served the purposes of German nationalism and provided Germany with an anti-Classicist rhetoric that allowed German scholars to construct a national identity independent of Classicism. As McGetchin points out, Friedrich Schleghel's conceived the idea of an Indo-German renaissance that would be at least equally as significant as the humanistic Renaissance of sixteenth-century Italy.[9] With regard to literature, McGetchin goes on to argue, Orientalism and Indology provided German writers and intellectuals with the material to challenge eighteenth-century French Neoclassicism, and led to the emergence of German Romanticism and a literary movement based on 'spiritual purity' in order to counter 'the artificial contrived *Kultur* of an aristocracy dominated culturally by the French'. The first translations of *Sakuntala* proved especially influential in this respect and this would also be the case with Berchet's 'translation' in Italy, as the next chapter will make clear.[10] It should be emphasised, however, that the prime classical enemy for German Orientalists was Rome and not Greece. In fact, 'Greece was already an established alternative to Franco-Roman culture, so the Indian cultural opposition to Rome joined a well-known binary opposition, uniting against a common enemy'. In certain circles, scholars went so far as to suggest that 'Greece and Scandinavia both owed a significant debt to India.'[11] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, however, has argued that Germany's obsession with India and hopes of a new renaissance derived from Germany's fixation with the marginal role it had played in European

8 Douglas T. McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania and Orientalism* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007), p. 55.
9 McGetchin, *Indology*, p. 68.
10 McGetchin, *Indology*, p. 70.
11 McGetchin, *Indology*, p. 71.

civilisation during the Classical Renaissance.[12] Be that as it may, Orientalism and the Indo-European concept did have a northern flavour that pointed to the identity of northern European countries such as Britain, France and Germany. The challenge for Risorgimento Italians was to respond to the identity discourses of Indo-Europeism, while embracing and renewing their classical identity.

An important trend that challenged Indo-Europeanism in Risorgimento Italy was the Pythagorean myth. The myth stressed the native tradition of Pythagorism on the Italian peninsula, which in turn pointed to the Italic indigenous, rather than Indian, origins of classical and Mediterranean civilisations. With the advent of Indo-European philology and the linguistic theories that followed, 'Italic' came to refer to a branch of the Indo-European family of languages, including Latin, Oscan, Umbrian, and the Romance languages. As a result, according to the Indo-European concept, even the people that spoke those languages were of an Indo-European ethnicity or 'race'. Ancient Greeks and Romans, as well as modern Europeans, were said to be the descendants of the ancient tribes that had migrated from ancient India to Europe. The routes of these migrations were debated, but many northern theorists, particularly those keen to emphasise the Indo-Germanic aspect of the Indo-European theory, claimed that tribes such as the Latins (or Romans) had entered the Italian peninsula via the European North. Thus, the Romans were not considered indigenous to the Italian peninsula, but rather to belong to an ethnic group that had originated in India and that had reached the Italian peninsula most likely via Germany. Moreover, according to this theory, the Etruscans were not Indo-European, but autochthonous to the Italian peninsula.[13] Indeed, the Pythagorean myth was used to challenge these Indo-European arguments by claiming that the origins of the Italic culture, thought and race were traceable to the Italic school of Pythagoras in Kroton, located in what is now the southern Italian region of Calabria. The myth was rooted in Vico's *De antiquissima italorum sapientia* (1710),

12 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 6–9.

13 Colin Renfrew, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), p. 67. Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, p. 6.

and Italian nationalists among the 'Pythagoreans' included Vincenzo Cuoco, author of *Platone in Italia* (1806), Giuseppe Micali, author of *L'Italia avanti il dominio dei Romani* (1810), and Angelo Mazzoldi, who wrote *Origini Italiche* (1840), as well as Vincenzo Gioberti, author of *Del primato italiano* (1846).[14]

This approach to Roman history, in reacting to the new Indo-European concept, involved an interaction between Orientalism and Classicism similar to that described in relation to Greek history in Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic roots of Classical Civilisation* (1987). Bernal traces the changes in the European academic approach to Greek history in the aftermath of the establishment of Orientalist philology between the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. He distinguishes between the earlier approach, which he calls the 'Ancient' model and which was based on classical sources, and the new approach, which he calls the 'Aryan' model and which was mainly influenced by nineteenth-century comparative philology, historical linguistics and anthropology. While the first model considered Greece to be 'Levantine' and 'on the periphery of the Egyptian and Semitic cultural area', the new model saw Greece as European and, in some extreme cases, even denied the influence that Egyptians and Phoenicians had exerted on Greece, and claimed that the Greeks were a mixture of both Indo-European tribes that arrived from the *north* and indigenous subjects. Bernal urges scholars to 'overthrow the Aryan model', which he claims came into vogue when it became intolerable for nineteenth-century Europeans to think that Greece – 'which was seen not merely as the epitome of Europe but also as its pure childhood' – had been 'the result of the mixture of native Europeans and colonizing Africans and Semites'.[15] Clearly, the Indo-European theory had divided the Mediterranean in two – its northern Aryan shores versus its southern Semitic shores – a division that, as we will see in the Epilogue of this book, would inform the fascist 'Manifesto of Race' and legislation in 1938. Indo-European philology,

14 See Paolo Casini, *L'antica sapienza italica: Cronistoria di un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998). See also Sebastiano Timpanaro, 'Giacomo Lignana e i rapporti tra filologia, filosofia, linguistica e darwinismo nell'Italia del secondo ottocento', *Critica storica*, 16 (1979), pp. 406-503 (414).

15 Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation*, 2 vols (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987–2006), vol. 1, pp. 1–2.

as opposed to the classical philology of the Italian Renaissance, denied any affinity or link between Graeco-Roman civilisation and the Semites and Egyptians, thus raising new questions about the Judeo-Christian tradition.

Two other important cases in point in relation to the criticism of Indic Orientalism in favour of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance were Risorgimento thinkers Gian Domenico Romagnosi and Carlo Cattaneo. Their interest in Orientalism and India was related to how Orientalist philology had brought about a renewed interest in the history of world civilisation, which for them was useful in their quest for the more suitable forms of *incivilimento* and *convivenza* [social life] for the new Italy. Although the ultimate aim was to theorise about Italian *incivilimento*, Romagnosi and Cattaneo were keen to include in the process a comparative assessment of the patterns of civilisation and decline in order to lend their theories a more universal significance. Both thinkers, however, concluded that India had nothing more to teach than classical antiquity.

Romagnosi had worked for the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy, where he had taken up a law professorship, before going on to become a leading figure in disciplines such as political economy and mathematics when Lombardy was returned to Austria in 1814. He put statistics and political economy in dialogue with the philosophy of history and civil philosophy in order to develop his notion of *incivilimento*. Romagnosi's engagement with Orientalism occurred through the translation of William Robertson's *An Historical Disquisition Concerning the Knowledge Which the Ancients Had of India* (1791), on which he also wrote a commentary, the 'supplimenti' [supplements].[16] In his introduction, Romagnosi commented on how this work, explored in comparison to Robertson's *The History of America* (1777–96) and *The History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V* (1769), raised points and issues which, for the Italian, were relevant to discussions of (world) *incivilimento*. While the history of America and the history of

16 Guglielmo [William] Robertson, *Ricerche storiche sull'India antica. Sulla cognizione che gli antichi ne avevano, e su i progressi del commercio con questo paese avanti la scoperta del passaggio pel capo di buona speranza di G. Robertson, con note, supplimenti ed illustrazioni di G. D. Romagnosi*, trans. Gian Domenico Romagnosi (Florence: Piatti, 1835).

Charles V exhibited the gradual development of *incivilimento*, the history of India showed a society in which the arts, the law, religion and the sciences tenaciously preserved the 'relique di un'antichissima coltura' [relics of a most ancient culture] that survived 'la possanza distruttrice del tempo' [the destroying power of time].[17] Romagnosi pointed the finger at the caste system, its exclusionary dimension and the fact that it greatly limited the values of social life, and while attributing Indian stagnation to religion, he questioned the originality of Indian *incivilimento* and its significance in relation to Italian *incivilimento*.[18] Moreover, while he acknowledged the affinities between Sanskrit, Latin and Greek, he did not accept that these affinities pointed to an Indo-European civilisation which had originated in India. He argued about the impossibility of the development of a 'native' civilisation anywhere – that is, a civilisation originating in a specific place and being an exclusive creation of that place's people, without the influence of other civilisations. For him, all civilisations are 'dative' and result from contact between different civilisations. Civilisation in India, according to him, was the result of India's contact with Mediterranean civilisation:

> l'India fu il luogo in cui si rifuggirono i lumi della più alta *nostra* antichità, già molto sviluppati, e che ivi noi abbiamo trovato gli archivi di questi lumi, senza che questo provi che nell'India siano nati, e di là propagati altrove; né che ivi siano stati trasportati nei tempi remotissimi che alcuni immaginarono.
>
> [India was the place where the wisdom of *our* [my italics] highest antiquity made its appearance, already very developed, and here we have found the archives of this wisdom, but this does not prove that they were born in India, and that from there they spread elsewhere; nor that they were transported there in very old times as some imagined.][19]

As a result of this convinction, Romagnosi was sceptical in considering Indian civilisation and the findings of the Oriental renaissance as more

17 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', in *Ricerche storiche*, pp. 369–558 (VIII). Robertson's comparativism in these historical works was an offspring of Orientalism's comparative philology and its new comparative method in history and the humanities.

18 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', pp. 376, 379.

19 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', pp. 386–8.

significant than classical antiquity or the early modern Italian city-states, and his conclusions are that Italians should look for civilisational models in Italy's historical past.

Above all, he rejected the idea that Indian culture was more ancient than Egyptian culture or that it was superior to classical antiquity. For instance, he mentioned how Herodotus had depicted the Indians, 'pari ai selvaggi di America' [in the same way as the savages of America], and stressed that Egypt's 'geroglifici fonetici sono certamente anteriori alla scrittura alfabetica che si pretende usata … dagli indiani' [phonetic hieroglyphics are older than the alphabetic writing that is assumed was used … by the Indians]. This was reflected also in Indian legends, which, on the one hand, 'assomigliano a quelle dei fanciulli' [resemble children's stories] and, on the other, depict 'rozze passioni, violenze e stragi, senza sospettare di offendere il senso morale' [crude passions, violence and massacres, without suspecting to offend moral sense].[20] Romagnosi's narrative is imbued with allusions and references to Greece and Rome, and this is particularly done by means of classical representations of India. For instance, he refers to the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus, who, thanks to his contact with Indians, 'parla non per congettature' [speaks not for suppositions] or 'greche narrazioni' [Greek narrations], but 'dice espressamente di riferire di cose narrate fra gli Indiani' [expressly says that he is reporting things narrated among Indians]. It is the Indian pandits themselves who deny the high levels of civilisation that Europe wants to attribute to India's ancient culture; and it is also they who confess to owe civil life, through agriculture and religion 'agli stranieri venuti dalla parte dell'occidente' [to foreigners who came from the West].[21] Last but not least, there is 'ethnic' evidence that culture in India arrived from the West: the three superior castes are distinguished from the inferior castes not only by their religious and political privileges but 'pel color delle carni e dei tratti del viso' [by the colour of their flesh and the features of their faces]. Romagnosi thus reversed the Indo-European theory and concluded that it was not the Indians who migrated to Europe, but white

20 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', p. 380.
21 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', p. 381.

European races who spread throughout India and brought with them European (classical) civilisation: 'Tutto porta a credere che esse [le caste superiori] formavano una sola stirpe di razza Bianca, che lentamente si diffuse per l'India, i cui abitanti sono di color scuro, coi quali furono sottoposti a freno religioso e quindi al di lei dominio' [All brings us to believe that the superior castes formed one sole people with the white race who slowly spread throughout India, whose inhabitants are of a brown colour, and that through religion, became the dominant race].[22]

Romagnosi's rejection of the European Oriental renaissance and his argument about the legacy of the classical idea in the shaping of modern Europe was founded on Robertson's account of the influence that early modern Italy had had on Europe's commercial relationship with India. If early modern Italians were 'gli agenti precipui dell'attuale possanza commerciale' [the principal agents of contemporary [modern] commercial power] of Europe, this was due to the 'genio della loro classica terra' [genius of their classical land] – a genius that was then inherited by other European nations, such as Britain. For this reason alone, Italians should read this book (i.e. Robertson's) that brings so much 'national' glory to their classical land.[23] However, it is the emphasis on the Italian medieval republics that Romagnosi liked about Robertson's book. This was a topic dear to him and a central aspect of his theories about Italian *incivilimento*: the emergence of the Italian city-states in the barbarous Middle Ages and the flourishing of Italian civilisation in the Renaissance.

This familiar dialectic of Orientalism versus Classicism also involved a comparison between ancient India and ancient Rome. In his essay *Dell'indole e dei fattori dell'incivilimento con esempio del suo risorgimento in Italia* (1832), Romagnosi continued to praise the Italian medieval city-states also by means of a comparison between Roman and Indian law.[24] He considered Roman law a tool for the transmission and progress of civilisation, and contrasted it

22 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', p. 381.

23 Romagnosi, 'Supplimenti', p. xii.

24 Romagnosi's comparativism should be seen as the influence of comparative philology and its impact on world history.

to the Hindu 'Code of Manu'.[25] He went on to argue that the Code of Manu applied only to the Brahmins and was not promulgated among any other group. As a result, a huge portion of the Indian people was at the mercy of the Brahmins, without being able to benefit from the protection of written law to which they could appeal. Conversely, the Romans wrote their laws and applied them to everyone. The 'Italian' people had, of course, benefitted from the survival and the transmission of this civil law:

> Se noi ringraziar dobbiamo la provvidenza di aver fatto sorgere i romani autori delle leggi, dobbiamo pure ringraziarla di aver fatto sorgere gli italiani conservatori e cultori delle medesime, i quali le radicarono non solamente nella loro mente e nel loro cuore, ma nelle loro famiglie, e nelle loro terre. Senza di ciò l'opera della romana sapienza sarebbe rimasta come inutile monumento a guisa del codice di Menu ritrovato nelle Indie.
>
> [If we must thank providence for having Romans as authors of laws, we must also thank providence for making Italians the repository of and the experts on these same laws. Italians rooted them not only in their mind and in their hearts, but in their families and in their lands. Without this, Roman wisdom would have remained a useless monument like the Code of Manu found in India.][26]

Romagnosi considered the transmission of Roman law the key to Roman, 'Italian' and European progress. The two main phases of Roman history, imperial and Christian, were in this way seen as the catalyst for Italian and European progress:

> Roma … L'unione delle nazioni sotto il di lei dominio servir dovea per piantare in loro i germi dell'ulteriore incivilimento che dovevano essere fomentati dal cristianesimo. …

25 A code of law 'discovered' by the new Orientalism, and translated for the first time from the Sanskrit by William Jones in 1794. See Sir William Jones, *Institutes of Hindu Law: Or the Ordinances of Menu, According to the Gloss of Cullùca, Comprising the Indian System of Duties, Religious and Civil* (Calcutta: Printed by Order of the Government, 1794).

26 Gian Domenico Romagnosi, *Dell'indole e dei fattori dell'incivilimento con esempio del suo risorgimento in Italia*, in *Opere di Romagnosi, Cattaneo e Ferrari*, ed. Ernesto Sestan (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1957), pp. 139–290 (249). Romagnosi here mentions in a note that the Code of Manu had been translated by William Jones in 1794.

> Se il cristianesimo fosse stato, come la religione di Siva e di Visnu, un tessuto di atti di esteriore culto senza impegnare il cuore e la mano alle virtù sociali; … se avesse sanzionato privilegi iniqui fra gli uomini, come nell'indiano bramismo, all'ora l'Italia e l'Europa non avrebbero dal cristianesimo ritratto l'immenso benefizio dell'attuale loro civiltà.
>
> [Rome … The union of nations under its domination planted the seeds for the future Christian civilisation. … If Christianity had been, like the religion of Siva and Vishnu, a fabric made up of external cults which did not engage the heart to form social virtues; … if it had sanctioned iniquitous privileges among men, like in Indian Brahmanism, then Italy and Europe would not have drawn from Christianity the immense benefits which shape their current modern civilised state.][27]

Romagnosi thus defined Roman and Italian civilisational progress against a static India. It was this Eurocentric rhetoric of progress that he used to explain the potential for the 'third' modern rebirth that Risorgimento Italy aimed to accomplish. Controversially, this form of Eurocentrism had a freedom struggle at its heart. At the same time, Romagnosi's dismissal of Indian *incivilimento* also constituted a dismissal of the Oriental renaissance and, most importantly, a rejection of the northern and particularly German theories of European progress based on the Indo-European concept.

Similarly, Cattaneo, one of Romagnosi's disciples, also showed an interest in Orientalist philology and the reconfiguration of world civilisation that stemmed from it. A polymath with interests ranging from philology, literature and linguistics, to history, politics, philosophy, economics and law, Cattaneo is considered one of the greatest intellectuals of the Italian Risorgimento, especially owing to his concerns with liberalism and republicanism.[28] He, too, used the Orientalist findings to theorise *incivilimento*, only on a more global scale than his teacher.

27 Romagnosi, *Dell'indole*, pp. 193 and 258.

28 See for instance Norberto Bobbio, *Una filosofia militante: Studi su Carlo Cattaneo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1971), Stuart Woolf, *A History of Italy 1700–1860: The Social Constraints of Political Change* (London: Methuen, 1979), Giuseppe Armani, *Carlo Cattaneo. Il padre del federalismo italiano* (Milan: Garzanti, 1997), and Filippo Sabetti, *Civilisation and Self-Government: The Political Thought of Carlo Cattaneo* (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2010).

Cattaneo's linguistic and historical discussions were greatly influenced by British and German theorisations of Indo-European linguistics, and were especially developed in the essay *Sul principio istorico delle lingue europee* (1841). Unlike Romagnosi, Cattaneo accepted the idea that India was older than either Egypt or Greece, as well as some of the conclusions of comparative philology regarding the Indo-European theory of languages.[29] However, Cattaneo entirely dismissed the ethnic dimension of Indo-Europeanism, and the alleged journey of ancient Indians to northern Europe as Orientalist philology and Herder's philosophical historicism would have it. He believed that it is impossible that Europe would have been uninhabited when the Orient was heavily populated, and thus approached with irony such speculations and asked: 'Qual ragione avrebbero pouto avere codesti sedentarii figli dell'India di fuggire in grandi … moltitudini da regioni belle e civili, per invadere sotto freddo cielo selve e paludi [Europee]?' [What reason might they have had, those sedentary children of India, to escape in great … multitudes from beautiful and civilised regions to invade, under a cold sky, [European] woods and swamps?]. He also made reference to Friedrich Schleghel, who is said to have asked himself this very same question and to have come up with some evidence of this journey towards the north in Brahmanic mythology, especially in reference to the legend of Mount Meru.[30] Cattaneo, on the other hand, entirely dismissed the possibility that Indians migrated to Europe, and even more importantly, he dismissed the biological implications of such ancient migrations that eventually led to ideas of racial progress in racial Aryanism (i.e. white Aryans were a biological evolution of dark Aryans). As a result, Cattaneo speculates that, if the European people all came from a 'comune patria Indiana' [common Indian patria], and made the journey using the same route and in similar climates, how could they have then become so different 'fra loro di lingua e d'aspetto?' [to each other in language and appearance?].[31]

29 Carlo Cattaneo, *Sul principio istorico delle lingue europee*, in Delia Castelnuovo Frigessi, ed., *Opere scelte* (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), 4 vols, ii, pp. 160–202 (160–96).

30 Cattaneo, *Sul principio istorico*, pp. 176–7.

31 Cattaneo, *Sul principio istorico*, p. 177.

Cattaneo also referred to Indic Orientalism in works such as *Dell'India antica e moderna* (1845). Cattaneo, like Romagnosi, set European/Mediterranean progress against Indian immobility, and speculated on the impossibility of applying Giambattista Vico's theory of the *corsi e ricorsi* (courses and recourses), as presented in his *Scienza Nuova* (1744), to the history of Indian civilisation. In his *India antica e moderna*, he writes:

> Vico, dopo ch'ebbe scoperto nelle istorie della Grecia e di Roma un procedimento comune, lo riputò principio naturale di tutto il gènere umano; e lo circoscrisse a un ricorso perpetuo d'emancipazioni che dalla omèrica violenza condùcono le genti all'equità civile, onde poi per la curva d'un'inevitàbile corruttela, e quindi d'una recidiva barbarie, s'inàugura una nuova carriera d'emancipazioni.
>
> [Vico, after he had discovered in the histories of Greece and Rome a common pattern of rise and fall, considered this pattern a natural principle for all mankind. He defined this pattern as an everlasting recurrence of emancipations that lead peoples from Homeric violence to civil equality, and then to a process of unavoidable corruption and therefore barbarism, after which a new process of emancipations would start.][32]

The history of classical antiquity had shown the alternating phases of flourishing, decadence and re-flourishing. The history of Indian civilisation, however, demonstrated a different trajectory: from a great initial flourishing to subsequent perpetual immobility. On the one hand, this meant that Vico's theory could not be applied universally, but on the other hand, it confirmed that Europe, and Italy in particular, embodied that Mediterranean and classical humanism which had made it possible to achieve cycles of civilisations. Cattaneo speculates that the inapplicability of Vico's theory inevitably points to the singularity of Indian history, with particular reference to the question of perpetual immobility versus Italian and European progress:

> Ma questa sua [Vico's] fòrmola non porge il filo dell'incivilimento indiano, nel quale, in luogo delle successive trasformazioni, regna il principio d'una ferrea perpetuità. ... Fra le due società, la nostra e l'indiana .... ora l'una si vede illuminata, forte, audace,

32 Carlo Cattaneo, *Dell'India antica e moderna*, in *Opere scelte*, 4 vols, ed. Delia Castelnuovo Frigessi (Turin: Einaudi, 1972), ii, pp. 494–544 (494).

> scòrrere colla potenza del vapore tutti i mari, e seminar di novelle popolazioni quanto rimane di abitàbili terre; l'altra, dopo una prematura gioventù abbellita dalle arti e dalla poesìa, declinar subitamente a vecchiezza ingloriosa, inerme, infeconda, non curante delli altri nè di sè, cieca di ogni lume di scienza esperimentale, ammaliata da insanàbili superstizioni.
>
> [But in his formula, Vico does not explain the path of Indian civilisation, in which, instead of successive transformations, there reigns the principle of immobility … Between the two societies, Indian society and our own … one is enlightened, strong, audacious, floating by the power of steam on all seas and populating all inhabitable lands; the other, after a premature youth embellished by art and by poetry, declined immediately to an inglorious and barren oldness, without caring for others nor for itself; blind to experimental science and fascinated by incurable superstitions.][33]

The inapplicability of Vico's theory to India suggested to Cattaneo a similar conclusion to that of Romagnosi about the limited significance of using Indian civilisation in debates on world *incivilimento*. Cattaneo's conclusion, therefore, was that Indo-Europeism retained something useful in linguistic terms, but he rejected its value on any other civilisational ground. Like Romagnosi's, Cattaneo's Eurocentrism set Italian modern progress against Indian immobility. The use of the Indo-European concept thus served the purposes of debating not only Italian modernity, but also of setting the centrality of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance against the marginality of Indian civilisation to narratives of historical progress in Risorgimento discourse.

The birth of Italian Indology: Gaspare Gorresio and the Turin Sanskrit School

Despite the hostility displayed by early nineteenth-century Italian intellectuals towards the Indic renaissance, by the middle of the century there emerged an Italian expression of the new European Indology. The first

33 Cattaneo, *Dell'India antica e moderna*, p. 494–5.

contribution in Italian to the new academic field was the translation of the Indian epic poem *Ramayana*. The author of the translation, Gaspare Gorresio, studied Sanskrit with Eugène Burnouf in Paris, where in 1843 he began the publication of the twelve volumes of the Italian translation of the *Ramayana*. In 1852, Gorresio became Professor of Sanskrit at Turin University. Another chair of Sanskrit in the same university was established the following year for Giovanni Flechia, who went on to write the first Italian Sanskrit grammar in 1856.[34]

Turin thus became the centre of Risorgimento Indology. Turin was the capital of the Kingdom of Sardinia, which included both Piedmont and Sardinia. This was the most advanced state in pre-unification Italy and the most sensitive to European cultural trends, and was also one of the leading forces in the Risorgimento movement. Both Gorresio and Flechia, with their study of Sanskrit, revived an already lively tradition of Oriental Studies in Piedmont, which, through the work of the scholar Amedeo Peyron, had previously focused on Egyptian. Peyron was one of the few innovative scholars of classical philology – which in Italy had remained stagnant since the time of the Counter-Reformation – and was also the one to encourage Gorresio to study Sanskrit and to put him in contact with Burnouf in Paris.[35]

The translation of the *Ramayana* was, to a large extent, a political event as it had been funded by Carlo Alberto, King of Piedmont and Sardinia, who was keen on the new European scientific trends. Gorresio dedicated the translation to his king, and in the dedication at the beginning of the first volume, he expresses his gratitude for the king's support and encouragement:

> Mercè la generosa e splendida munificenza Vostra, o SIRE, l'Italia entra ora degnamente anch'essa in possesso dei nuovi studj. ... Voi, o SIRE, incoraggiaste, proteggeste,

34 For further information on the establishment of Italian Indology and of the first chairs of Sanskrit in pre-unification Italy, see R. M. Cimino and F. Scialpi, *India and Italy: Exhibition organized in collaboration with the Archeological Survey of India and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations* (Rome: IsMeo, 1974), pp. 138–41. See also Giovanni Flechia, *Grammatica sanscrita* (Turin: Marietti, 1856).

35 Timpanaro, 'Giacomo Lignana', pp. 410–12.

> secondaste con ogni maniera di sovrano favore questi miei studj. … E questo, o SIRE, sarà un nuovo testimonio di quella regale amplissima Vostra munificenza verso le lettere, le scienze, e le arti.
>
> [Thanks to Your generous and splendid munificence, o SIRE, Italy now worthily enters in possession of new studies. … You, o SIRE, encouraged, protected, seconded with every means of sovereign favour these my studies. … And this, o SIRE, will be a new testimony to Your royal and very ample munificence towards letters, science, and the arts.][36]

Gorresio, in the same dedication, proudly announced that Italy, too, was now contributing to the new studies. Earlier on in the dedication, Gorresio had pointed out that France, Germany and Britain were already at the forefront of the new Sanskrit studies, and also discussed the necessity for Italians to follow in their steps for the sake of scientific advancement, especially 'per lo studio intimo … della storia dell'umanità' [for the close study … of human history].[37]

For Gorresio, Classicism was no longer sufficient to understand human experience. Although Indian antiquity was related to classical antiquity according to the new Orientalist genealogy, India had by now acquired a new and unprecedented importance. In the preface to his translation of the Indian epic, Gorresio argued that, while Greek poetry betrayed a greater concern with human faculties in their relation to the graceful aspects of nature, Indian poetry dealt more with nature in its entirety, with its pantheism transcending human individuality and form. Because of these differences, Indian poetry was more profound than Greek poetry. While comparing Homer's *Iliad* to the *Ramayana*, Gorresion maintains that

> la poesia del Ramayana è generalmente più profonda, più intima, più grande, ma nel tempo stesso esuberante per soverchia pienezza; è la poesia dell'infinito: quella

36 Gaspare Gorresio, 'Prefazione', in *Ramayana: poema sanscrito di Valmici. Traduzione italiana con note dal testo della scuola gaudiana per Gaspare Gorresio*, 12 vols (Paris: Dalla Stamperia Reale, 1843), vi, pp. i–xx (vii).

37 Gorresio, 'Prefazione', p. iv.

> di Omero più animata, più viva, più pronta, ma temperata sempre da conveniente sobrietà. In Omero l'individualità dell'uomo risalta meglio e con più energia; la sua efficacia, la sua forza si manifestano più vivamente: nel Ramayana l'uomo non si distacca sovente abbastanza dal fondo, direi così della natura; la sua individualità pare talvolta unita e quasi vincolata ad essa; la sua azione, la sua energia non ispiccano sempre con sufficiente e vigoroso rilievo, effetto fors'anche delle dottrine panteistiche, che lasciarono impressi nella poesia Valmiceja profondi vestigj.
>
> [The poetry of the Ramayana is generally more profound and intimate, greater, but at the same time, more exuberant and fuller; it is the poetry of infinity. Homer's poetry is more animated, more alive, more prompt, but always rendered temperate by a convenient sobriety. In Homer, man's individuality is put in evidence better and with more energy; its efficaciousness and strength reveal themselves more warmly: in the Ramayana, man is never detached from nature. Man's individuality sometimes looks united with and almost bound to nature; his action and energy are not shown in isolation from natural phenomena, which is perhaps due to the pantheistic doctrines of Valmiki's poetry.][38]

What is striking about this passage is that Gorresio praises Sanskrit literature for its merging of human and non-human nature, where mythological deities, rather than taking on human forms as in Greek mythology, are sketches of shapes which constantly change. As will be seen, the humanisation of natural phenomena in mythology remains a subject of contention in the dialectic between Classicism and Orientalism (and between Classicism and Romanticism). The Classicists will precisely argue the opposite of Gorresio's remark, that is, that the Greek humanisation of phenomena marks the aesthetic and intellectual revolution accomplished by classical mythology, which in turn was what allowed the emergenge of European humanism and modernity.

Gorresio, on the other hand, continued to express his dissatisfaction with classical antiquity, and to claim that knowledge of Greece was no longer enough to answer many historical questions. In a letter he wrote in the later post-unification period to another prominent Orientalist, Angelo De Gubernatis, the former clearly spelt out to the latter what had attracted him to India:

38 Gorresio, 'Prefazione', p. vii.

> Quello che principalmente m'indusse allo studio della storia, dell'idioma, della letteratura e delle tradizioni dell'India fu il conoscere che quanto alla favella, ai miti, alle origini, alle idee specialmente religiose, la Grecia non aveva in sè tutti gli elementi necessari a renderne ragione, che tutto in essa indicava un'età più lontana, accennava a un'epoca anteriore, in cui doveva trovarsi la soluzione di molti problemi di storia, di religione, di credenze, di miti; perciò dallo studio della Grecia volli penetrare nella conoscenza dell'India.
>
> [What mainly persuaded me to study the history, the language, the literature and the traditions of India was the knowledge that the study of Greece was no longer satisfactory for the understanding of the questions of origins, mythology and religion. All the indications pointed to a more distant age, in which the solution to many problems of history and religion must be found; therefore from the study of Greece I wanted to move to the study of India.][39]

Similarly, Giovanni Flechia, author of the first Sanskrit grammar in Italian in the mid-1850s, described the excitement of the new science – by now associated with positivism – and its importance with regard to history and philology, as well as scientific progress. He warned that Risorgimento Italy could no longer afford to be indifferent to these new trends:

> Lo studio del sanscrito, introdottosi in Europa poco più di mezzo secolo addietro, viene ora generalmente riconosciuto come sussidio potentissimo della storia e filologia antica ed è fondamento della grammatica comparata delle lingue indoeuropee. Quindi principalmente l'ardore con cui questa lingua è coltivata oltremonti, massime in Allemagna. Sebbene l'Italia presentemente non si mostri gran fatto sollecita di questa sorta di discipline, è tuttavia da credere che nè anche per questo rispetto essa abbia da rimanersi più oltre nell'indifferenza.
>
> [The study of Sanskrit, introduced in Europe more than half century ago, is now generally recognised as a very powerful aid to [the study of] ancient history and philology, and it is rooted in the comparative grammar of Indo-European languages. Hence the fervour with which this language is cultivated beyond the Alps, especially in Germany. Though Italy is not presently heavily engaged in this

39 Letter from Gaspare Gorresio to Angelo De Gubernatis, quoted in Angelo De Gubernatis, 'Cenni sopra alcuni indianisti viventi', *Rivista europea*, 4 (1872), 56–8 (57).

discipline, it is possible to believe however that it should no longer remain indifferent in this respect.][40]

It should be noted that Indology and the study of India are discussed in *national* terms and in order to address *Italian* renewal and advancement in political, cultural and scientific terms. Though as opposed to Romagnosi and Cattaneo, and the Pythagorean intellectuals, India here is approached with a more celebratory attitude, there is still an element of domestication for the sake of Italian nationalism. There is in fact a subtle line between Piedmontese scientific advancement in relation to political influence in Risorgimento Italy and Europe, and the Risorgimento cause of national independence proper. There is in Piedmontese Indology a tendency to engage with a rhetoric of national knowledge and power – a rhetoric that will become dominant in the post-unification Italian Indology and professional Orientalism explored in Part II of this book.

It is also worth noting that in Flechia's first historical work on India, *Storia delle Indie Orientali* (1862), the first in the field of Italian Indology, the first chapter is dedicated to a comparative geography between India and Italy – a comparison involving the physical features and natural beauties that were central, according to the author, to the springing of civilisation and the flourishing of literature and the arts in the respective 'countries'.[41] While the work covers not only geography, but also natural history, ethnography and anthropology, as well as the history of the Indian subcontinent, from its earliest times to British India, it is significant to point out that Flechia appears to be sympathetic to British imperialism.[42] Such an attitude on Flechia's part may be taken as a sign of the times, since the the work was published one year after Italian unification, when the 'germs' of Italian colonialism were already beginning to hatch. As will be seen in Chapters 4 and 5, *orientalistica*

40 Giovanni Flechia, *Grammatica Sancrita* (Turin: Marietti, 1856), pp. iii, iv.
41 Giovanni Flechia, *Storia delle Indie Orientali* (Turin: Sebastiano, 1862), pp. 3–7.
42 See Flechia, *Storia*, pp. 945–1285.

became increasingly enmeshed with Italian politics and, in part, served colonial expansionism.

Romantic Orientalism and the Italian Classicist–Romantic (and Orientalist-Classicist) quarrel

Even before the Risorgimento discussions of Italian *incivilimen*to, Pythagoreanism and the birth of Piedmontese Indology, and starting from the 1810s, European Orientalism had triggered parallel debates pertaining to aesthetic matters in Risorgimento Italy. These debates related to the reception of Romantic Orientalism in Italian Romanticism, in which context the Orient was domesticated to set an emerging Romantic nationalism against a more established Classicist nationalism. These literary but also identitarian and political tensions came to be known as the Classicist-Romantic quarrel. The literary quarrel between Classicists and Romantics also contained the dialectic between Orientalism and Classicism seen above, and should be seen as articulated on two main levels: on one level, the Risorgimento engagement with Romantic Orientalism was an attempt to align Risorgimento culture with northern European standards, in order to promote cultural advancement and to challenge Classicist provinciality; and on another level, Classicist resistance to Romantic Orientalism was part of a conservative attitude aiming to defy the northern nations' criticism of Italian political and cultural decadence.

Romantic Orientalism was introduced in Italy by two texts that are at the heart of the Classicist–Romantic quarrel and central to Risorgimento debates about Italian Romanticism. These two texts form the focus of Chaper 2. The first, by Giovanni Berchet, is a homage to Indian literature and consists of a translation of *Sakuntala*, as well as a commentary, *Sul dramma indiano* La Sacontala: *Saggio di Giovanni Berchet*, originally published in *Il Conciliatore* in 1818 and republished in 1819 by Vincenzo

Ferrario.[43] The second, Ludovico Di Breme's *Osservazioni* (1818), in a similar style to Berchet's commentary, comprises a set of observations on Lord Byron's poem *The Giaour* – a poem influenced by Jones' translations of Turkish and Persian poetry – in which Byron deals with Islam, murder, passion and redemption in Turkish-ruled Greece.[44] However, in Chapter 3, I hope to illustrate the development of a *negative* or nihilistic form of Romantic Orientalism – which partly developed in reaction to Di Breme's Orientalist enthusiasm – with theoretical and poetical works by Giacomo Leopardi, such as *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica* (1818), 'Cantico del gallo silvestre' (1824) and 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia' (1830). In order to better grasp the significance and role of these 'Orientalist' texts in the Classicist-Romantic quarrel and Risorgimento discourse, it is crucial to see how Classicist resistance to Orientalism was related to how Classicists considered the Romantic trends unpatriotic, and argued that (Neo)Classicism and the tradition of Renaissance humanism constituted the real *national* tradition of Italy.

43 Giovanni Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano* La Sacontala: *saggio di Giovanni Berchet* (Milan: V. Ferrario, 1819). It is also interesting to note that the first translation into Italian of Kalidasa's drama, *Sakuntala*, was undertaken in 1815 by Luigi Doria, a professor of Italian in Germany (University of Darmstadt) who was clearly in contact with German Romanticism. In his introduction to the translation, Doria asserted in a Romantic mode that 'il dramma di Sacontala, ossia l'Anello fatale ..., è l'opera la più interessante dell'antica letteratura' [the drama of Sakuntala, or the Fatal ring ... is the most interesting work of ancient literature]. Calidasa, *Sacontala. Ossia L'anello Fatale*, trans. Luigi Doria (Darmstadt: Dalla Stamperia Stahl, 1815), p. ix. According to Doria, the Indian drama was of interest because it revealed an artistic genius predating that of the Greeks, with many affinities with Greek dramatic art.

44 Lodovico Di Breme, *Osservazioni*: Il Giaurro: *Frammento di novella turca scritto da Lord Byron e recato dall'inglese in versi italiani da Pellegrino Rossi* (Ginevra, 1818), in *Polemiche*, ed. Carlo Calcaterra (Turin: Unione Tipografico-editrice Torinese, 1923), pp. 79–159.

Romantic Orientalism and the Classicist–Romantic quarrel

It is generally assumed that the two main texts that brought Romantic ideas to Italy were Madame De Stäel's *De l'Allemagne* (1813) and A. W. Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature* (1809, translated into Italian by Giovanni Gherardini in 1817). Both Schleghel and De Stäel, in their conceptualisation of modern poetry and literature, favoured an anthropological understanding of literature based on historical actuality and the contemporary. It is precisely the modern inquiry into the *truth* of things, these texts claimed, that results in the awareness that the past cannot be remoulded in arbitrary ways for the sake of formal emulation, and therefore Neoclassical imitation. Modern civilisation had multiplied the effects of the human heart, and therefore the needs of the human imagination, as a result of the recent conflictual history of mass movements, particularly the French Revolution. Indeed, the Revolution was considered by the Romantics as the most significant event in the history of the state, and Friedrich Schleghel went so far as to call it a monstrous tragicomedy.[45]

The reception, support and diffusion in Risorgimento Italy of the Romantic ideas occurred primarily at the hands of a small number of figures: Ermes Visconti, Pietro Borsieri and Silvio Pellico, together with Berchet and Di Breme. They were the first to label themselves 'Romantics' in Risorgimento Italy, and were all based in Milan, which at that time was part of the Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, and had been under Austrian rule since the Congress of Vienna in 1815. For these writers, as Fabio Camilletti explains, Classicism 'epitomized the inactivity of pre-revolutionary Italy, which Napoleon definitively dissolved in the Battle of Lodi'.[46] These authors, as well as the literary works they penned, wrote articles, pamphlets, works of criticism, commentaries and translations in the new Romantic mode. Crucially, these Italian Romantics founded and contributed to the liberal, anti-Austrian journal, *Il Conciliatore*, which was published between 1818 and 1819. The journal served as an instrument for

45 Ezio Raimondi, *Romanticismo italiano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997), pp. 19–25.

46 Fabio Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism in Italian Literature: Leopardi's Discourse on Romantic Poetry* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), pp. 3–5.

the diffusion of Romantic and patriotic ideas in Risorgimento Italy, and dealt with subjects as diverse as science, political economy, literature and aesthetics.[47] These literati had also played a role in the political and intellectual life of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy between 1805 and 1814 and so they fully embodied the nationalism of the Risorgimento, even if they had given it a cosmopolitan slant. During those years, Milan was the capital of the Napoleonic kingdom, and it had already proved to be one of the Italian peninsula's major cultural centres, with the circles of the Enlightenment reform movement *Il Caffè*, which also gave its name to its militant journal. Those involved in *Il Conciliatore* were the heirs of *Il Caffè* group, and their work and influence went hand in hand with their political feelings. However, the Romanticism they promoted was short-lived in Risorgimento Italy as they were either arrested by the Austrians (in the cases of Pellico and Borsieri) or had to go into exile (Berchet).[48]

The Classicists, on the other hand, considered their tradition truly patriotic, whereas Romanticism was for them foreign and unpatriotic. They viewed De Staël's and the Romantics' position as 'the continuation, in the literary sphere, of the foreign invasions suffered by Italy since the sixteenth century, finding their peak in the recent experience of the Napoleonic Wars'.[49] It is this political tension that exacerbated the Classicist–Romantic quarrel in Italy. The three most significant authors of the time, in fact – Ugo Foscolo, Alessandro Manzoni and Giacomo Leopardi – continued to work in isolation, and even though they engaged with or appropriated the northern European Romantic trends promoted by the Milanese Romantics, they contested the definition of Romanticism or the idea that they were Romantic authors.[50] Moreover, of these three authors, the first, Foscolo,

47 See the journal's programme by Pietro Borsieri, in Vittore Branca, ed., *Il Conciliatore: Foglio scientifico-letterario*, Year, 1, September-December 1818 (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1948), pp. 1–10.

48 See Ann Hallamore Caesar and Michael Caesar, *Modern Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), p. 71.

49 Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 35.

50 See Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 23. Joseph Luzzi also discusses these three authors as the three canonical authors of Romantic Italy. See Joseph Luzzi,

wrote in a clearly Neoclassical style, while the last, Leopardi, aligned himself with the Classicist side of the quarrel, even if, as we will see, he appropriated Romantic trends, including Romantic Orientalism.

When Romantic Orientalism made its appearance in Risorgimento Italy, the literary landscape was already shaped by a Neoclassicism, also of European derivation, inspired by Giuseppe Parini and developed by several important disciples such as Vittorio Alfieri, Vincenzo Monti and Foscolo. The Classicist tradition in Italian letters dated back to the Renaissance and had been strengthened by academies such as the Arcadia, founded in Rome in 1690, through which Classicism was re-habilitated in place of Baroque poetics. However, Enlightenment Neoclassicism had reached Italy via France through cosmopolitan processes, thus giving way to the Italian Neoclassicism of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[51] Medievalism, together with Orientalism, were two Romantic trends that challenged Neoclassicism, including the Neoclassical Romanticism of Foscolo and Leopardi. As Adrian Lyttleton has shown, among the uses of the past made by Risorgimento commentators, the Middle Ages, and the Romantic medievalism that derived from them, were also a crucial component of Italian 'Romantic nationalism'. Although it remained a minor trend in Italy, Romantic medievalism facilitated a new way of looking at the past, which involved 'new conventions of representation, and a new, positive evaluation of the Middle Ages'.[52] The transition from ancient Rome to the Middle Ages as the roots of Italian national identity renewed the importance of the Catholic Church as a 'source of national coherence'.[53] Important novels of the time, many of which were historical patriotic epics and belonged to a national/popular genre, include

---

Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 29.

51 Hallamore and Caesar, *Modern Italian Literature*, pp. 13–64.

52 Adrian Lyttleton, 'Creating a National Past: History, Myth and Image in the Risorgimento', in A. Ascoli and K. Henneberg, *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 27–74 (29).

53 Lyttleton, 'Creating a National Past', p. 33.

Massimo D'Azeglio's *Ettore Fieramosca* (1833), Giambattista Bazzoni's *Il castello di Trezzo* (1827) and Francesco Domenico Guerrazzi's *L'assedio di Firenze* (1836). These novels were influenced by the Milanese Romantics and their emphasis on Italian indigeneity and nationalism. The texts of Romantic Orientalism by Berchet and Di Breme were part of the same project of Romantic nationalism in Risorgimento discourse. They constituted a political and aesthetic revolutionary operation in line with the Milanese Romantics' attempt to spread both Romantic thought and anti-Austrian and nationalist sentiment in Italy. The picture in which these engagements with Romantic Orientalism took place is complex and nuanced, and it is useful to provide a little more background to the quarrel between Classicists and Romantics.

The single event that triggered the virulent polarisation between Classicists and Romantics in Italy was an article written by De Stäel in 1816 and entitled 'De l'esprit des traductions' [On the Spirit of Translations], translated by the Classicist Pietro Giordani and published the same year in the journal *Biblioteca italiana* with the title 'Sulla maniera e l'utilità delle traduzioni'. In this article, De Stäel urged Italian authors and intellectuals not to confine themselves to classical antiquity or the legacy of the Classical Renaissance, but to embrace the new literary trends developing in Europe and translate new European works. She argued that when writers fall into the repetition of modes, images and concepts, it is a sign of the impoverishment of that national literature, and the only solution to such impoverishment is the translation of other national literatures from which inspiration can be drawn.[54] She wrote that Italians, therefore, should turn their attention beyond the Alps, not merely to imitate other authors, but to know them and be inspired by them.[55] This was the only way to lift Italians from the 'ceneri antiche' [ancient ashes] and awaken them from their 'sonno oscuro' [obscure sleep].[56]

54 Germaine De Stäel, 'Sulla maniera e la utilità delle traduzioni', trans. Pietro Giordani, in *Manifesti romantici e altri scritti della polemica classico-romantica*, ed. C. Calcaterra (Turin: Editrice torinese, 1979), p. 84.

55 De Staël, 'Sulla maniera', p. 89.

56 De Staël, 'Sulla maniera', p. 91–2.

De Staël's article triggered various reactions towards Romanticism, and these reactions were political as well as literary. The three works that appeared in 1816 in support of De Staël's article came to be seen as the main Italian Romantic manifestos: Ludovico Di Breme's *Intorno all'ingiustizia di alcuni giudizi letterari*, Pietro Borsieri's *Avventure letterarie di un giorno, o consigli di un galantuomo a vari scrittori*, and Giovanni Berchet's *Sul 'Cacciatore feroce' e sulla 'Eleonora' di Goffredo Augusto Bürger. Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo*.[57] However, Berchet's and Di Breme's engagements with Romantic Orientalism in *Osservazioni* and *Sul drama indiano*, as the next chapter argues, *are* other examples of De Staël's recommended approach to literature, and should be considered part of the same Romantic project and two other Romantic manifestos. Part of my argument in the next chapter is that Berchet's and Di Breme's Romantic Orientalism also betrays the influence, direct or indirect, of Jones' work – an influence that has never been acknowledged to date.

At the same time, Classicists such as Pietro Giordani, Caleppio Trussardo, Carlo Giuseppe Londonio, Davide Bertolotti became resentful towards De Staël's and responded in polemical ways. For Trussardo Caleppio, for example, Italian literature, not to mention culture, even without the translations demanded by De Staël, would remain 'ricchissima' [very rich]. He expresses his wish to fight against those foreigners that, either because they do not know Italy or because they are devoured by a raging envy, 'credono di poter impunemente fare oltraggio al glorioso nome italiano' [believe that they can with impunity offend the glorious Italian name].[58] As Olga Ragusa points out, De Staël's and A. W. Schleghel's texts gave rise to a wave of anti-Romanticism in Italy which influenced not only the historiography of Italian literature

57 Olga Ragusa, 'Italy/Romantico – Romanticismo', in H. Eichner, ed., *'Romantic' and Its Cognates: The European History of a Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), pp. 293–340 (306).

58 See, for instance, Pietro Giordani, '"Un italiano" risponde al discorso della Staël', and P. L. V., 'Un attacco contro la Staël', Caleppio Trussardo, 'Due articoli contro madama De Staël', Carlo Giuseppe Londonio, 'Risposta ai due discorsi di Staël', Davide Bertolotti, 'La Gloria italiana vendicata dale imputazioni della signora baronessa di Staël Holstein', in *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)*, 2 vols, eds E. Bellorini and A. M. Mutterle (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 10–75.

but also lexicography and the terminology surrounding Romanticism. As a result, the term 'Romantic' came to acquire a series of negative connotations associated with exaggeration, unnaturalness and even psychological dishonesty.[59] Many Italians on the Classicist side, such as Giovanni Gherardini, were reluctant to accept De Stäel's criticism because they saw their literature and culture, especially the Italian Renaissance, as the highest expressions of human achievement.[60] For the Classicists of the nineteenth century, therefore, but also for some of the reluctant Romantics, such as Foscolo and Leopardi, the programme of the Milanese Romantics was rather confusing and unclear. Most importantly, this programme was seen as the imposition of a northern European phenomenon on Italian letters.

Back to Jones's Orientalism?

Whether or not Italian letters produced major works of Romantic Orientalism, the theorisations of Berchet's and Di Breme's 'Orientalist' texts remain significant in Italian debates on Romanticism, nationalism and Europeanness. To underestimate the weight of the theoretical work of the Milanese Romantics because none of these authors produced literary masterpieces, especially of Romantic Orientalism, would be at least short-sighted. In terms of literary culture, as Joseph Luzzi confirms by referring to the *Conciliatore* and the Classicist–Romantic quarrel more generally, the year 1818 alone remains 'one of the more explosive in modern Italian history'.[61] Moreover, while De Stäel's and Schlegel's texts are usually considered the primary sources of the debates on Romanticism in Italy, it is my aim to show that many of the Romantic ideas debated by Di Breme and Berchet stemmed from the Orientalist work by Jones, which is usually considered central to the Oriental renaissance and the birth of Romantic Orientalism: his codification of Eastern poetry, and his translation of *Sakuntala*.

59 Ragusa, 'Italy/Romantico – Romanticismo', p. 299.

60 Giovanni Gherardini, 'Due note al "Corso di letteratura drammatica" di A. W. Schlegel', in *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)*, vol. 1, pp. 201–3.

61 Luzzi, *Romantic Europe*, p. 55.

The relevance of Jones' codification of poetry to Italian Romanticism derives, in the first instance, from Jones' impact on Byron's *The Giaour*, which is the poem chosen by Di Breme for his theorisation of Italian Romanticism. Echoes of such theorisations, however, are also found in Berchet's commentary on *Sakuntala*, the Sanskrit play first translated by Jones. As a way of aiding the analysis of these theorisations in the next chapter, it is useful to explore the main points of Jones' codification of poetry in the volume *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (1772). This volume consists of Oriental poems ('Solima, an *Arabian* eclogue', 'The Palace of Fortune, an *Indian* tale' and 'The Seven Fountains, an *Eastern* allegory') and Neoclassical poems ('Arcadia, a pastoral poem' and 'Caissa') written by Jones himself, as well as his translations of Persian ('A *Persian* song of *Hafez*') and Turkish ('A *Turkish* ode on the spring') poems, and some Italian poems by Petrarch ('An Ode of Petrarch' and 'Laura, an elegy'). These are accompanied by two theoretical essays, 'Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations' and 'Essay on the Arts, Commonly Called Imitative', which end the work.[62] In *Poems*, Jones aimed to point European audiences towards a poetic tradition, the Eastern tradition, which the scholar claimed to be free of imitation. He hoped to move European writers away from the Neoclassical trends of imitating Greek and Roman poetry and convince them that they ought to poetically engage with human passions and nature instead. As he puts it:

> It shall be my endeavour in this paper to prove, that, though *poetry* and *musikc* [*sic*] have, certainly, a power of imitating the manners of men, and several objects in nature, yet, that their greatest effect is not produced by *imitation*, but by a very different principle; which must be sought for in the deepest recesses of the human mind. ... It seems probable then that poetry was originally no more than a strong and animated expression of the human passion, of *joy* and *grief*, of *love* and *hate*, *admiration* and *anger*, sometimes pure and unmixed, sometimes variously modified and combined.[63]

62 William Jones, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1772).

63 Jones, *Poems*, pp. 202–3.

It is exactly this idea of poetry as the expression of human passions, the recesses of the human mind and the imitation of nature that will influence Berchet's poetics of passion, but more importantly Byron and, in turn, Di Breme's idea of *poetic furor* – an idea that remains central to the theorisation of Italian Romanticism, as Chapter 2 will show.

Jones' influence on literary aesthetics has been studied by Zak Sitter in a brilliant essay entitled 'William Jones, "Eastern" Poetry and the Problem of imitation' (2008).[64] This essay focuses on the question of imitation and its centrality to the transition from eighteenth-century Neoclassicism to early nineteenth-century Romanticism. Sitter's central argument is that Jones' theorisation of the problem of imitation in the late eighteenth century involved two main ideas of imitation: one involving the 'imitation of nature', and the other 'the imitation of prior models', of which Alexander Pope's *Imitation of Horace* (1733–8) is one famous example. For Sitter, the two essays that conclude the volume *Poems* must be read as 'a program to reform and regenerate European poetry that finds in the Orient the example of a poetic tradition in which art does not imitate'.[65] This non-imitative quality of Eastern poetry, Sitter argues, made it possible for Jones to situate imitation temporally and geographically, thus showing that it is the product of a specific cultural and historical context, namely modern Europe, while undermining the Classicist claim that imitation is the organising principle of poetry. This, Sitter concludes, allowed Jones to restore poetry to what he considered its true principle: 'the expression of passion'.[66]

In Italian Neoclassical circles, especially in the works of Alfieri, Parini and Foscolo, imitation had indeed been the organising principle of poetry, which had political, rather than solely aesthetic, motivations as it related to Italy's classical identity. But the Milanese Romantics aimed to challenge this principle, claiming that such challenge would inspire new conceptions of language, people and nation associated with patriotism, literary renewal and historical actuality. Jones' theorisations are not only echoed in De Stäel's

64 Zak Sitter, 'William Jones, "Eastern Poetry" and the Problem of Imitation', in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 50, no. 4, Winter 2008, pp. 385–407.

65 Sitter, 'William Jones', p. 388.

66 Sitter, 'William Jones', p. 398.

invitation to renew literature – and especially Italian literature – through translations; they are especially echoed in Romanticism's concern with nature, and especially with the depiction of nature in Oriental poetry, as the antidote to Neoclassical imitation, which both Berchet and Di Breme embrace. Jones' concept of the imitation of nature (in Oriental poetry), rather than classical models, involved 'assuming her [nature's] power, and causing the same effect upon the imagination, which her charms produce to the senses'. For Jones, the poetry of the 'Eastern nations' did precisely that, which is why he deemed it important that it be translated for European audiences.[67] De Stäel preached a similar approach to translation in Italy in relation to both European literature, including the Oriental tale, and it is difficult not to see Jones' legacy in her discussion of the importance of literary translation for the renewal of literature. Jones was the first to urge Europeans to translate works – especially the works made popular by Orientalist philology – for the renewal of European literary aesthetics. As Sitter explains, while classical Europe and Asia are seen in terms of affinities, difference appears as Europe enters modernity, when imitation takes over as praxis and the 'universality of passion as poetry's guiding principle' is discarded. This is where 'Eastern' poetry, as a 'counterexample to the poetics of imitation', can serve modern Europe: 'Jones makes his case for what modern European poetry ought to be through reference both to what it has been (Europe's classical past) and to what the alternative tradition of Eastern poetry shows it could be'.[68]

Jones' work proved revolutionary because, as well as providing new literary geographies after the Neoclassical obsession with Greece and Rome, he was the first to reject Aristotelian mimetic notions, making the lyric impulse

67 '*That, if the principal writings of the Asiaticks, which are reposited in our publick libraries, were printed with the usual advantage of notes and illustrations, and if the languages of the Eastern nations were studied in our places of education, where every other branch of useful knowledge is taught to perfection, a new and ample field would be opened for speculation; we should have more insight into the history of the human mind, we should be furnished with a new set of images and similitudes, and a number of excellent compositions would be brought to light, which future scholars might explain, and future poets imitate*' [original italics], Jones, *Poems*, pp. 198–9.

68 Sitter, 'William Jones', p. 401.

the primary and universal model for poetry, and the imitation of nature, as Michael J. Franklin puts it, the 'voice of nature herself'. Thirty years ahead of William Wordsworth's definition of poetry as 'the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings', Jones had described poetry as 'originally no more than a strong and animated expression of the human passions', thus providing the Orientalist 'objectivity' for the 'Oriental tales' of Romantics such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Robert Southey, Byron, Percy Shelley, and Thomas Moore, to mention a few.[69] In the cases of both Berchet and Di Breme, their theorisation points to the animated expression of inner feeling and human passion by means of the voice of an 'Oriental' nature. Leopardi, on the other hand, responded to these ideas both theoretically and through poetry by recuperating the Hebrew and classical traditions, and problematising Orientalism and the voice of nature itself as antagonistic to inner feelings and mere modern fashions.

Orientalism: The nation, the world and pan-Europeanness

The link between Orientalism, nationalism and globalisation, and their relationship with literary aesthetics, is explained by Aamir R. Mufti when he tells us that modern Orientalism was 'the cultural system that for the first time articulated a concept of the world as an assemblage of "nations" with distinct expressive traditions, above all literary ones'. This is a crucial point that established Orientalism as a central moment in the development of a 'national', as well as a 'cosmopolitan' or 'worldly' (i.e. worldwide) literary consciousness (inextricably linked to politics).[70] Indeed, if the philological revolution of Orientalism 'sought to make the world whole for the first time',[71] this was also the first time that the attempt to group together languages and the peoples that spoke them created *difference*, that is, hierarchies of languages, nations, religions and ethnicities. In

69 Michael J. Franklin, *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer, and Linguist, 1746–1794* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 86.

70 Aamir R. Mufti, *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016), p. 35.

71 Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 35.

these hierarchies, Europe and Europeanness came always at the top and the primary epistemological, political and aesthetic concern. And as Mufti points out, 'this early codification of Orientalist knowledge, to which ... Herder made a significant contribution, is the very ground on which the new ideas of cultural difference came to be elaborated, tested, contested, and defended'.[72]

As a pan-European phenomenon, modern Orientalism consolidated the idea of a whole Europe – though centred on Britain, France and the German states. However, the notion of Europe was discussed in relation to both the rest of the non-European (i.e. Oriental) world, and its internal North-South divide. As Roberto Dainotto has shown, eighteenth-century thought, and especially figures such as Montesquieu, had already given rise to the inception of modern Eurocentrism, and this attitude was not confined to a relationship between Europe and the Orient, but also differentiated between the European North and the European South.[73] European Orientalism took such differentiation to new levels. If, as Dainotto argues, the European South, and Italy in particular, became the internal other of Europe, and a parallel to Europe's external other (i.e. the Orient), such marginalisation of Italy became exacerbated by modern Orientalism, and in particular by the Indo-European narratives of (northern) Europeanness and Latin decadence. Dainotto spells out that the roots of the Enlightenment distinction between a 'progressive, courageous and free' European North, and a 'static, cowardly and despotic' European South, are to be found in the 'climate theory', or climatology, of Montesquieu.[74] With the inception

72 Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 75.

73 Dainotto, *Europe*, p. 53.

74 Dainotto, *Europe*, pp. 52–86. Dainotto has written on Montesquieu's impact on De Stäel's new co-ordinates of Romanticism and quotes the following passage in which Montesquieu differentiates between the European North and the European South, which went on to shape Romantic thought: 'In Europe there is a kind of balance between the southern and the northern nations. The first have every riches of life, and few wants: the second have many wants, and a few riches. To one Nature has given much, and demands little; to the other she has given but little, and demands a lot. The equilibrium is maintained by the laziness of the southern nations, and by the industry and activity which Nature has given to those in the north. The latter have to

of modern Orientalism, climate is expanded to history, customs and peoples (i.e. ethnicities), especially as German Orientalist philology interacts with Herder's philosophical historicism. Jones' work at large, and his 1772 codification of poetry in particular, as we will see, is an early phase of this process and an instance of a theorisation of literature in relation to the climate, manners and history of Oriental people.[75] These elements will be addressed by both Berchet and Di Breme in relation to indigeneity and local colour in Risorgimento discourse. But Jones was also the bridge between Montesquieu and the theorisations of the other important commentator of the time, Madame De Stäel. De Stäel was, of course, responsible for conducting attacks on the literatures of southern Europe, and Italy in particular, and for criticising them for being stagnant.[76] However, I hope to show that the scenario in which such hierarchies (i.e. like De Stäel's) took shape is the result of the interaction between Enlightenment Orientalism and the new institutionalised post-Enlightenment Orientalism that Jones personifies, even though discussions of Latin and Italian stagnation were primarily developed by German Orientalism and Herder's historicism. Dainotto makes parallels between the Orient and the South, but in actual fact, the European North established alliances with the Orient at the expense of the European South and classical antiquity. This new configuration is best exemplified by the link between India and Germany, which created the Indo-Germanic concept as a variation of the Indo-European notion. Northern European Romantics created new geographies of literature that also linked the medieval European North to the Orient. As Schawb explains, for instance, Hugo and the Romantics deemed Oriental poetry, 'shining from afar, a great poetry', in which 'everything was great, rich, fruitful, as in the Middle Ages, that other sea of poetry'. Schwab goes so far as to say

---

work a lot, or else they would lack everything, and degenerate into barbarism. This has naturalised slavery for the people of the south: as they can easily dispense with the riches, they can even more easily dispense with liberty' (Montesquieu, *Œuvres* 2:603, quoted in Dainotto, pp. 67–8).

75 See William Jones, 'Essay on the Poetry of Eastern Nations', in *Poems*.

76 See Madame De Stäel, *De la literature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (Paris and London: Colburn, 1812 [1800].

that the Romantics lamented that the 'modern age had been seen too much in terms of the century of Louis XIV and antiquity in terms of Rome and Greece', and wondered whether one might not have 'a higher and broader view of the modern age by studying the Middle Ages, and of the ancient world by studying the Orient'.[77]

The identitarian, aesthetic and political discourses of European renewal and modernity in the nineteenth century relied heavily on the dialectic between Orientalism and Classicism. The first European renaissance had been Classicist and somewhat southern, and the second claimed to be Orientalist and northern. Inevitably, Orientalism contributed to the split between northern and southern Europe, and the second renaissance and its modernity would always be measured in relation to the first, especially if the second claimed new European roots and a new understanding of historical progress and European modernity. In this sense, it is not surprising that in Risorgimento Italy – the cultural heartland of the Classical Renaissance and a would-be modern European nation – debates about Orientalism and Classicism would be particularly lively and controversial. It is in the light of these lively and controversial elements that I now turn to debates on literary Orientalism in Risorgimento discourse and Italian Romantic nationalism.

77 Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 13.

CHAPTER 2

Orientalism and the Romantic Risorgimento: The Manifestos of Giovanni Berchet and Ludovico Di Breme

This chapter explores the ways in which a strand of literary Orientalism became a central aspect of Romantic nationalism in Risorgimento Italy. It focuses on the two seminal writings and manifestos of Italian Romanticism already mentioned in the previous chapter: Bechet's translation of and commentary on *Sakuntala* and Di Breme's *Osservazioni* on Byron's *The Giaour*. Both texts form part of Italy's reception of European Romanticism. Their main arguments relate to the anachronism of the Neoclassical imitation of classical models, and consider literary, but also political and identitarian renewal in relation to literary cosmopolitanism and Orientalism. My aim here is to discuss Berchet's and Di Breme's works in the context of the impact of Orientalism in Italy, especially by placing them in dialogue with Jones' work and the debates around Romantic Orientalism. These authors, I argue, used Oriental literature and the European Oriental tale in conjunction with Risorgimento discussions of national emancipation, European modernity and literary cosmopolitanism. In these works, in other words, Romantic Orientalism is a discursive tool of political, cultural and aesthetic revolution against Classicist provinciality, modern stagnation and political oppression. At the same time, the perspectives of these texts, as in the historical texts by Romagnosi and Cattaneo, seem informed by a kind of Eurocentric bias even as they celebrate the Orient. These authors engaged with Romantic Orientalism as a way to engage with identitarian and civilisational European cultural trends, and adapted them to the Italian cause of national emancipation. However, in doing so, they inevitably came to replicate, and sometimes strengthen, some of the Orientalist tropes of Oriental primitivism already existing in European Orientalism.

Paradoxically, these Italian writers attempted to overcome the marginality of a stagnant Italy in modern European affairs by embracing some of the Eurocentric perspectives underpinning European Orientalism.

Giovanni Berchet's *Sul dramma indiano* La Sakuntala: Romantic Orientalism and Italian indigeneity

Giovanni Berchet is generally considered a minor poet in Italian literature and is chiefly remembered for introducing Romantic ideas in Italy, especially in his *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo* (1816). Curiously, however, his *Sul dramma indiano* La Sakuntala: *Saggio* (1818) is hardly mentioned in connection with the spread of Romanticism in Italy. I hope to demonstrate that *Sul dramma indiano* should be regarded as a complementary manifesto to *Lettera semiseria* in which Orientalism is used to articulate the main tenets of Romantic thought and Italian nationalism. Both works are important not only because their ideas were endorsed or challenged by greater writers, such as Manzoni or Leopardi, but also because they explicitly engage with Jones' and De Stäel's invitation to translate Oriental and European works, and introduce the main tenets of Romantic thought to Italy. These texts debate issues of literary indigeneity and cosmopolitanism, and discuss poetic notions in relation to passion, climate, history and the imitation of nature first put forward by Jones. In both works, Berchet used a fictional character – the 'sage' Grisostomo – and dialogue in order to discuss questions of aesthetics and politics. In *Lettera semiseria*, Berchet styles the narrative as a fictional letter in which Grisostomo, in a semi-serious manner, as the ironic title suggests, introduces Gottfried August Bürger's work (*Sul cacciatore feroce* [*Der wilde Jäger*], 1775 and *Eleonora*, 1774), so much praised by De Stäel, to his son. In the essay on *Sakuntala*, on the other hand, Grisotomo introduces the Indian play to 'all his readers' (*a tutti i lettori*), some of whom are sceptical Classicists. Grisostomo's main purpose in both works is to inspire the creation of a new, rich and living literature that would use a 'spoken' language,

and would be based on indigenous authenticity and history. With these works, in short, Berchet wished to inspire the emergence of a useful or utilitarian *patriotic* literature in which the emphasis would be more on feeling, morality, education, and, most importantly, (Italian) indigeneity as well as worldliness, than on the provincial and pedantic formalism of Neoclassical imitations of models or formulas.

Between the literary patria and the literary republic

Berchet was a fervent patriot who devoted his life to the cause of Italian independence. He was a senator of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy between 1810 and 1814, and one of the founders of the anti-Austrian journal *Il Conciliatore*. Primarily for these reasons, he was banished from Austrian-ruled Milan and spent most of his life in exile. In line with the Romantic revolution in Europe and the idea that the author was the 'prophet of the people', Berchet's work is imbued with notions of 'people' (*popolo*), universal brotherhood and ideals of national liberty.[1] He was the author of literary essays, poetry and translations that deal with questions of national independence with reference both to Italians and other oppressed peoples of the world. Berchet himself was in exile from 1821 to 1840, moving between Switzerland, France, England, Belgium and Holland. In poems such as *I profughi di Parga* (1823), *Le romanze* (1826) and *Le fantasie* (1829), he deals with issues of exile and foreign oppression, thus giving a political and social

1 It is important to note that there is a conflation of meanings in the concept of 'the people', as used by Berchet. As Ettore Li Gotti has pointed out, this notion derives from Herder's, but also Bürger's, notions of people, not meant as the lower classes or the uneducated, but as that almost divine entity associated with the idea of nation and of whom the poet becomes the spokesman. When Herder spoke of true poetry being the only poetry springing from the soul of the people, he used the word 'people' to signify a moral entity with nationalistic connotations, as opposed to the individual. With Berchet, the meaning changed slightly and by popular literature, he meant literature that could educate the people; in other words, a simple, spontaneous, sincere and immediate literature. Ettore Li Gotti, *G. Berchet: La letteratura e la politica del Risorgimento nazionale, 1783–1851* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1933), p. 81, n. 1.

context to the feelings he explores in connection with the oppressive conditions he himself experienced. In these works, nostalgia for a lost home, the solitude of exile, and the simple need for affection and human dignity are addressed in the political context which gave rise to them. For Benedetto Croce, Berchet was full of 'the religion of Italy', which was his only 'mistress', and his work, particularly after he went into exile in 1821, features a 'lyricism of the exile'. It was during his time in exile that 'his nostalgia', 'his deep love for his own country' and 'his dream of an Italy strong and great and free' took form.[2] Although Berchet worked with the idea of national tradition in mind (be it Italian or another national tradition), he thought that literature and poetry were universal and essential for human life. In his *Lettera semiseria*, he talked of the affection with which poets regard their own land and language, but also the energy of love which is the essence of poetry and that the poet shares with the whole human race.[3]

It was with this approach to literature and poetry in mind that he produced translations of popular literature, ballads and folk tales (together with *Sakuntala*, he translated Castilian, Spanish and German popular or folk tales)[4] as part of a cosmopolitan literary project aimed at reviving in Risorgimento Italy themes associated with popular traditions and Italian national history. As Ann Hallamore and Michael Caesar explain,

2 Benedetto Croce, *European Literature in the Nineteenth-Century* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1924), pp. 168–9 (174).

3 Marcello Turchi, 'Introduzione', in M. Turchi, ed., *Giovanni Berchet: Opere* (Naples: Rossi, 1972), pp. 13–38 (15–16). While Berchet believed that *literature* could aid the cause of nationhood, his literary *patria* was one that belonged to the universal Republic of Letters and that did not give rise to national rivalries: 'I poeti fanno classe a parte, e non sono cittadini di una sola società ma dell'intero universo. ... Né savio terrei chi nelle dispute letterarie introducesse i rancori e le rivalità nazionali. ... La repubblica delle lettere non è che una, e i poeti ne sono concittaddini tutti indistintamente' [Poets constitute a separate class, and are not citizens of only one society, but of the entire universe. ... Nor would I consider wise he who, in literary disputes, would introduce grudges and national rivalries. ... There is only one Republic of Letters and all poets, without distinction, are its citizens]. Giovanni Berchet, *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo*, in Carlo Calcaterra, ed., *Manifesti romantici ed altri scriti della polemica classico-romantica* (Turin, UTET, 1979), p. 433.

4 See Giovanni Berchet, *Opere*, ed. M. Turchi.

for Berchet, 'consciousness of history' was both a method and a theme: 'the growing interest in history accommodated both the assertion that there are no eternal laws of poetry, no perception of the realities of this world that are not subject to the laws of time, and the conviction that only in its own history will a nation, a "people", find its own identity'.[5] By engaging, through translation with the 'local colour ' (*tinte locali*) of other *national* histories, traditions and cultures – in our case Indian – Berchet hoped to invite Italians to reflect on their own local colour, in the form of social customs and life, as well as religion and history, so as to educate them to feel their nationhood through literature. For him, this did not mean that these translations must be emulated; rather, they should be seen as examples of popular literatures that deal with national traditions and the consciousness of their history, and from which Italian readers and writers could draw inspiration for the creation of a new popular Italian literature. Undoubtedly, Manzoni's *I promessi sposi* (1827) is a good example of the kind of outcome Berchet was hoping to inspire – a work that is didactic and that deals with the consciousness of history, oppression and emancipation, and with the idea of local colour (in the case of *I promessi sposi*, Milan and seventeenth-century Spanish-ruled Italy).

Translation, universalism and Eurocentrism

As the title – *Sul dramma indiano* La Sacontala: *Saggio* [*On the Indian Drama* Sakuntala: *An Essay*] – suggests, Berchet's *Sakuntala* is not meant to be a translation as such. *Sul dramma indiano* is made up of an introductory essay – far more significant than the translation itself, and therefore the focus of my analysis – in which Grisostomo is asked by his readership whether he would be willing to provide an epilogue for *Sakuntala*. In line with his prosaic translation of Bürger, the Indian play is rendered through prosaic epilogues of each act that also include some translations of passages from the play. These are mere summaries constructed in simple language

5 Hallamore and Caesar, *Modern Italian Literature*, p. 69.

with the purpose of making the drama as accessible as possible to all readers and laying an emphasis on feelings and thoughts. The translations from the passages of Jones' English translation are generally faithful to the original and there is no direct misunderstanding of the English version.

Berchet's approach to translation in *Sul dramma indiano* reflected contemporary debates and practices relating to translation, including Jones' approach to 'free translation' from *Poems* to *Sakuntala*. As Dorotha Figueira explains, Jones' translation of *Sakuntala* – the first from Sanskrit – was used for not fewer than forty-six other translations in twelve languages. Among the most important translations are Georg Foster's translation into German (1791), Bruguière's translation into French (1803) and Doria's translation into Italian (1815).[6] Given that the first translations of Sanskrit texts 'were so naively uninformed by linguistic analysis', they allowed 'a free play of the translator's creative imagination', and this is the case in Jones' translation, as well as in the translations of his English translation.[7] Berchet followed in the steps of Jones, and it is Grisostomo that links his *Sakuntala* to that of 'Guglielmo Jones' [William Jones].[8] While there is no mention of Doria's Italian translation, it is very likely that Berchet knew it, although he clearly used Jones' for his own prosaic rendition, as evidenced by the presence of the prologue in Berchet's rendition, which appears in Jones' translation but not in Doria's. By comparing the translated passages in Berchet's epilogues – which are easily recognizable as they are in italics – with Jones' translation, it is clear that Berchet followed the latter closely.[9]

Berchet used the question of translation to celebrate the theme of universal brotherhood so dear to him. For instance, to Grisostomo's remarks about Jones' translations of Indian poems in particular, one reader makes

6 Dorothy Matilda Figueira, *Translating the Orient: the Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Albany: State University New York, 1991), p. 23.

7 Figueira, *Translating the Orient*, p. 9.

8 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, pp. 7–8.

9 See William Jones, *Sacontalā or The Fatal Ring; An Indian Drama by Cālidās* (Calcutta: Cooper, 1789).

a connection between professional Orientalism, literary cosmopolitanism and anti-racism:

> Ottima cosa! Quelle poesie serviranno a moltiplicare i diletti dell'uomo meramente curioso; e … riconoscere l'uniformità delle menti umane nella varietà stessa degli accidenti intellettuali. E così verrà sempre più confermandosi nel mondo la … dottrina della fratellanza de' popoli, nessuno de' quali ha il diritto di far soperchierie agli altri, qualunque sia il colore della lor pelle.
>
> [Great thing! Those poems will serve to increase the enjoyment of the merely curious man; and … recognise the uniformity of all human minds in the variety of intellectual engagements. And so the doctrine of the brotherhood of peoples, according to which no one has the right to abuse others, regardless of the colour of their skin, will be ever more affirmed around the world.][10]

With this passage in mind, it would be useful to turn to Aamir Mufti's argument that Jones' work and comparative philology were the first instance of a comparative approach between European and non-European literatures, which Mufti considers the origin of world literature with an Eurocentric and especially Anglocentric bias. Berchet's comments and universalist concerns may seem to contradict Mufti's claim, but one should also recall, as Mufti does, that

> when a late eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century European writer turns to 'India' for a stock of motifs and images, explicitly with the hope of overcoming limitations or provinciality of hitherto existing European ideas about literature, culture, religion, or antiquity, he or she is still engaged in an exercise that is fundamentally European in nature, that is, embedded in a strong sense in the centres of the emergent world system and concerning its peripheries.[11]

Berchet turned to India – via Jones and the pan-European phenomenon of Orientalism – to deal with what was for him the provinciality of nineteenth-century Italian literature and thought, and especially the Neoclassical practice of imitating formulas and its conservative nationalism. Where does Berchet's comment stand, therefore, in relation to Mufti's statement about

10 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 7.
11 Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 29.

European literary attitudes towards India? It should be borne in mind that, in his *Lettera semiseria*, Berchet took the same universalist approach to Bürger's work and German poetry as he did with India in *Sul dramma indiano*. However, it is difficult to define the approach to Germany and German literature in the same Eurocentric vein. I would therefore argue that Berchet, in *Sul dramma indiano*, is more interested in European Orientalism than India itself. The practice of Orientalist philology and Herder's philosophical historicism, as Mufti cogently demonstrates, had given way to a Romantic attitude that had led Goethe to speak of *Weltliteratur* in relation to some sort of spiritual exchange between writers, intellectuals and artists committed to universal *Humanität*, and that was based on the concept of 'an organic link between a people and its language and place, its *literature* understood as the natural and unmediated expression of its unique character and genius'. Once again nationalism and universalism are brought together by the Orientalist framework. This cultural edifice was built on the Herderian foundations of *Volk* cultures and entailed 'the collections of folk-songs and folk-stories, dictionaries and grammars, philological treatises, Orientalist translations, and literary histories of national cultures'.[12] In the case of Berchet, a certain nativism therefore interacted with Eurocentrism and cosmopolitanism as questions of Italian language, literature, people were raised alongside Risorgimento Italy's aspirations for freedom and its place in Europe: the Orient, and northern Europe, and India and Germany in particular, in the wake of the Oriental renaissance and in line with its geographical co-ordinates, became tropes for the discussion of Italian cultural revival through literary cosmopolitanism.

Berchet's attitude could still be considered ambivalent in light of Mufti's belief that

> World literature came into being when the cultural system of the modern bourgeois West had appropriated and assimilated – that is, discovered, absorbed, recalibrated, rearranged, revaluated, reclassified, reconstellated, compared, translated, historicised, standardised, disseminated, and in short, fundamentally transformed – the widely diverse and diffuse writing practices and traditions of the societies and civilisations

12 Mufti, *Forget English!*, pp. 77–8.

> of the 'East', which extended in the Euro-Occidental imagination from the Atlantic shore of North Africa to the littoral of the Sea of Japan.[13]

Certainly Berchet was guilty of transforming *Sakuntala* for the sake of the cultural system of Risorgimento Italy, but he also transformed Bürger's German tales. What kind of Eurocentrism treats both Germany and India in the same way? How do we construe Berchet's exercise in *Sul dramma indiano* in quest of native Italian colour in a worldwide – though largely European – context of nations and (national) literatures? Is Berchet's, in short, not an attempt to bring wordliness to Italian literature by means of an engagement with the very European centre of 'world literature'?

An Orientalist 'chronotype of the indigenous' for Italian Romantic nationalism

In his introduction to the play, Berchet primarily dwells on the interacting themes of local colour, poetic passion and nature, or what Mufti would call the 'chronotype of the indigenous'. Mufti explains that Jones' codification of poetry published in his two 1772 essays was a 'theory of "national" poetic genius' in relation to a people's 'climate, manners and history',[14] which significantly overalapped with Herder's *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774) in offering 'spatiotemporal figures of habitation (in a place) in deep time' which 'became canonical for humanistic knowledge in the nineteenth-century'.[15] In *Sul dramma indiano*, what Berchet calls the *tinte locali* corresponds precisely to the 'chronotype of the indigenous'. Jones himself,

13 Mufti, *Forget English!*, p. 49.

14 Jones writes: 'We are apt to censure the Oriental style for being so full of metaphors taken from the sun and moon: this is ascribed by some to the bad taste of the *Asiaticks; the works of the Persians, says M. de Voltaire, are like the titles of their kings, in which the sun and the moon are often introduced* [*sic*]: but they do not reflect that every nation has a set of images, and expressions, peculiar to itself, which arise from the difference of its climate, manners and history', *Poems*, p. 188.

15 Mufti, *Forget English!*, pp. 70–4.

in the preface to his English translation, tells us that, in his 'faithful translation of the Indian drama', he is presenting readers with the 'most pleasing and authentic picture of old Hindu manners'.[16] Berchet's are indeed the *tinte locali* of Hindu life, society, climate and religion as represented in *Sakuntala*, seen through their universal and popular qualities. The idea of local colour – an expression of a worldly (i.e. worldwide or global) literary nationalism and applicable to the relationship between every people and their literature – presents the images, thoughts, feelings and style of a civil society at a given historical moment, which Berchet calls a 'state of human nature' and which the writer – in this case Kalidasa – imitates:

> In gran parte le bellezze di questo componimento derivano dall'affluente freschezza delle *tinte locali*. Intendo per tinte locali quella tale modificazione d'immagini, di pensieri, di sentimenti, di stile che è propria esclusivamente ... di quello stato di natura umana e di quel momento di società civile che il poeta piglia ad imitare.
>
> [To a large extent, the beauties of this composition derive from the pervading freshness of the *local colour* [my italics]. I mean by local colour the shaping of images, of thoughts, of feelings, of style which is typical exclusively ... of that state of human nature and that moment of civil society which the poet decides to imitate.][17]

In Jones' essay 'On the Poetry of Eastern Nations', the climate of Oriental *nations* (it is useful to bear in mind that Jones contributed greatly to seeing the Orient as divided into nations while providing a new global perspective) is said to allow their people to have a closer relationship with nature, and a consequent heightened inclination towards beautiful metaphors. In relation to the Arabs, Jones wrote: 'The metaphors taken from them [Arabs] have an additional beauty, if we consider them as made by a nation, who pass most of their nights in the open air, or in tents, and consequently see the moon and stars in their greatest splendour'.[18] It is interesting to see Berchet's similar approach in linking Oriental nature and people (or nation

16 William Jones, *Sacontalā or The Fatal Ring*, p. iii.
17 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, pp. 11–12.
18 Jones, *Poems*, pp. 177–8.

or indigeneity). Berchet says of Indian conceptions of beauty and feeling in relation to climate and nature that:

> Un popolo posto sotto di un cielo sereno, su di un suolo ridente di fiori e di frutti; un popolo a cui tutte le bellezze della natura sono eterno spettacolo, deve sentir vivamente il piacere della vita. Traendo i suoi giorni il più all'aperto, è naturale che egli contempli sempre le bellezze che lo circondano, e ... che ogni minuta particolarità da lui osservata nella natura gli mantenga perpetua nell'animo una serie di sentimenti tutti in armonia cogli oggetti ch'egli vagheggia ...
>
> [A people living under a blue sky, on a soil fertile for flowers and fruits; a people to whom all the beauties of nature are an everlasting spectacle, must feel strongly the pleasure of life. As they spend most of their their days in the open air, it is natural that they always contemplate the beauties that surround them, [and] ... that each tiny detail observed by them in nature perpetuates a series of feelings in harmony with the objects that they yearn for ...][19]

Grisostomo pays particular attention to the state of nature in which Indians live, as a result of the blurring of the Indian local colour and nature, and the feelings that stem from such a state are described by referring to the Indian people, beauty, nature and spectacle. Thus, the idea of human feeling is represented through an imitation of nature, thus creating a nature that feels as humans do, and humans that feel through nature; or, in other words, through a depiction of human feelings expressed by a representation of nature:

> L'ardenza dei raggi di sole gli fa riporre la somma delle voluttà nella frescura dell'ombre, nella mite dolcezza del chiaro della luna, nell'aspetto dei ruscelli.... In lui [l'uomo indiano] il sentimento di queste delizie è si permanente che informa sempre in qualche modo le idee concomitanti dei suoi concetti, e gli presta immagini di confronto onde esprimere ogni altro suo godimento. Nella stessa maniera all'assenza di esse egli paragona sempre ogni sua pena.
>
> [The burning of the sun's rays inspires [the Indian man] to place life's voluptuousness in the coolness of the shade, in the mild sweetness of the moonlight, in the flows of rivulets ... In him, the experience of these delights is so constant that it always informs

19 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 12.

> his ideas in some way, and provides him with images through which he can measure every other enjoyment. In the same way, he always compares each pain within him to the lack of this sentiment.][20]

The idea of local colour used by Berchet relates to all these aspects of Indian life and nature (i.e. history, manners, costumes, climate), and the chronotype of the indigenous aims to revive the indigenous cultural heritage, but also to render it universal for the appreciation of the whole human community, as well as the Republic of Letters. The artistic quality of the drama is indisputable and Grisostomo stresses how, in depicting the feelings of the protagonists, 'Calidasa tenne conto di tutte quelle gradazioni delicate che costituiscono l'amor gentile de' popoli molto inciviliti' [Kalisada took into account all those soft gradations that constitute the tender love of very civilised peoples]. Thus Kalidasa is compared to Shakespeare, and before moving on to give an account of the drama, Grisostomo informs his audience that it is important for Italians to attend to the historical and geographical particularities of India in order to appreciate the beauty and richness of their literature:

> Perche' il maraviglioso della Sacontala faccia effetto sull'animo de' lettori d'Italia, fa d'uopo che questi colla fantasia loro si trasportino nei boschi sacri dell'Indostan, ed assumano in certo modo per alcun tempo le opinioni e le credenze de' popoli devoti a Siva, a Rama, a Visnù.
>
> [In order for that which is wonderful in Sakuntala to have an effect on the minds of Italian readers, they must wander with their imagination into the sacred woods of Hindustan and take on for a while the opinions and the beliefs of the peoples devoted to Siva, to Rama, to Vishnu.][21]

Berchet's intention was that, in reading about Indian history, climate and manners, Italians would reflect on and celebrate their own local colour in order to nourish their patriotic feelings and nationalist sentiment. It is in this sense that Orientalism and *Sakuntala* were part of Berchet's Romantic nationalism.

Written by the fifth-century poet Kalidasa, what was striking about the Indian play for Jones and the Romantics he went on to inspire was the

20 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 11.
21 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 14.

psychological depth of its characters. Taken from the epic narrative of the *Mahabharata*, Kalidasa developed a delicate range of emotions in the characters, thus dramatising the links between *kama* [love] and *dharma* [duty]. The plot revolves around two characters falling in love, the Raja Dusyanta and the beautiful Sakuntala, who accepts to marry the Raja at the prospect of their son becoming king. The drama of the story consists in Sakuntala neglecting to pay homage to the visiting *rishi*, Durvasa, because she is lost and abstracted in her love for Dusyanta. Durvasa feels offended and punishes Sakuntala with a curse, according to which her beloved Dusyanta will forget her. Thanks to mediator Priyamada, Durvasa promises to forgive Sakuntala's neglectful oversight and restore Dusyanta's memory on the condition that she produce a token of recognition – the fatal ring. As Franklin points out, the drama balances the secular and the divine, the intuitive and the imaginative, and the natural and the artistic. What captivated Western audiences was the feast of the senses that the drama offers, from Sakuntala's sensual loveliness, her love of flowers, the descriptions of their perfumed blossoms, as well as the 'mingling passions' which cause the audience 'to indulge in a synesthetic banquet of the emotions'.[22] With reference to classical antiquity and Aristotle's conceptualisation of drama, Franklin explains that

> whereas Aristotle's *Poetics* defined catharsis as a cleansing of emotion, a purging that results in a feeling of peace and well-being, the rasas [Indian dramas] represent the aesthetic heightening of eight emotions (erotic, comic, compassionate, furious, heroic, fearful, horrific, marvellous, and later even peaceful) which, being cleansed of any disagreeable can delight the learning soul. The rasas were achieved through the harmonious arrangement of eight corresponding bhavas or moods.[23]

Berchet summarised the process of the heightening of the various emotions in the play described above in a simpler manner for his readers. He says that the only subject matter of *Sakuntala* is 'l'amore' [love]. Most importantly, this 'passione' [passion] is described 'dal suo nascere fino alle più miserabili delle sue sciagure, attraverso le quali gli amanti giungono finalmente ad uno stato di pacata contentezza' [from its nascent stages to the more miserable outcomes,

22 Franklin, *Orientalist Jones*, p. 264.
23 Franklin, *Orientalist Jones*, p. 265.

through which the lovers finally reach a state of peaceful contentment].[24] It is this broader scope of passion and nature, which Berchet renders as inextricably linked to the chronotype of the indigenous, that made Orientalism so appealing and favourable as poetic inspiration and Romantic anti-Classicist trope. Finally, by referring to the idea that *Sakuntala* depicted the love of civilised people, Berchet was also engaging with that other crucial question debated at the time: could Indian antiquity have really been older than classical antiquity and passed on its wisdom to ancient Greece?

Orientalism versus Classicism

Grisostomo, in line with the literary cosmopolitanism already presented in the *Lettera semiseria*, praises the literary quality of *Sakuntala*, ironically hinting at the fact that this ancient work even preceded the literature of classical antiquity.[25] The first reaction of the audience devised by Berchet is an expression of the Classicist belief that 'i Greci avranno insegnata l'arte della poesia anche agli Indiani' [the Greeks will have taught the art of poetry to the Indians]. Implicitly, the Classicists are depicted as undermining the credibility of the Indo-European concept that had placed India at the origins of Europe, as was the case with the many of the Italian Classicists and other intellectuals such as Romagnosi explored in Chapter 1. But Berchet deliberately problematises such scepticism and allows the possibility that Indian civilisation might have been older than classical antiquity, and in a genealogical relationship with it. Through 'un altro' [another] of his audience/characters, for instance, he puts forward Indic Orientalism's central idea that India was the cradle of humanity and that classical antiquity was on offspring of Indian antiquity: 'Chi sa anzi che i Greci non la imparassero forse eglino dagli Indiani? L'India fu probabilmente la culla del sapere umano' [Who knows whether it was not the Greeks who learnt it from the Indians? India was probably the cradle of human knowledge].[26] As Berchet refers to India as the place of all origins, he

24 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 13.
25 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 5.
26 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 6.

engages with the debates on Europeanness triggered by the dialectic between Orientalism and Classicism in Risorgimento discussions of Italian origins and identity.

In his engagement with Indic Orientalism, Berchet's focus remains on his militant challenge of Classicism in the Classicist-Romantic polemic, the cultivation of Italian indigeneity and his promotion of Romantic nationalism. Grisostomo even goes beyond the level of anti-Classicist polemic. Anticipating his readership's hostile reaction and resistance towards the appreciation of a work that is not related to classical antiquity, he hints at the artistic quality of Kalidasa's work, notwithstanding the fact that it does not descend from any Greek or Latin ancestor.[27] The dialogue between Grisostomo and his readership/audience allowed Berchet to indirectly set out the parameters of the polemic: Grisostomo's remarks and the audience's reaction to them constitute a kind of play in which Grisostomo and the readership become characters representing different strands of the Classicist-Romantic quarrel (the audience is further divided according to different perspectives). The most extreme faction of Classicists is represented by 'Alcuni de' più vecchi' [some of the eldest] readers, and their reaction to Grisostomo's presentation of the Indian poet consists in lamenting the quest for literary models outside of Italy: 'Oh tempi! Povera Italia, fuor dei tuoi confini si vanno a cercare i poeti oggidì!' [Oh, the times! Poor Italy, poets are searched outside of your borders nowadays!].[28] The fact that the anti-cosmopolitan statement is made by 'some of the eldest' in the audience points to the alleged conservative provinciality of Classicist nationalism.

Moreover, in order to lay emphasis on how Classicist prejudice in Italy is passed on from one generation to the other, Berchet creates another more youthful Classicist group character among the 'lettori' [readership], made up of 'alcuni de' più giovani' [some of the younger people], who are also shown to resist Orientalism, Romanticism and *Sakuntala*: 'A noi non importa nè dell'India nè di Dramma, nè di Unità. Importa bensì che nessuno ci faccia il dispetto di parlarci di cose alle quali non abbiamo pensato noi prima. Più dotti di noi non si può ne si debba essere. Addio; discorrila,

27 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 4.
28 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 4.

se ti piace, colle panche, ma non con noi' [We do not care about India, drama or unities. We care that nobody upsets us by telling us of things of which were not the first to think about. Nobody can be more learned than us and nobody should be. Adieu; speak to the benches, if you like, but not to us]. Classicist arrogance and resistance, however, can be rectified, even among the eldest, and Berchet's didacticism makes one of the eldest stay after the others have left, and become open to hearing about this ancient piece of drama. Berchet's hint here is that many people would be interested in hearing about the new Orientalist and Romantic trends, were it not for their prejudice, and he makes another reader say that it is those that have left that are the real deserters of Italy and Italian culture.[29]

Indeed, the fascination for Indic Orientalism and the Oriental renaissance it gave birth to had reached Risorgimento Italy, and as it challenged Classicism, it served well the theorisation of a new, modern, didactic, nationalist and cosmopolitan Romantic literature that could have an impact on Risorgimento discourse. Up to this point, however, Orientalism in Italy had been interpreted in non-racial terms, even if it betrayed a Eurocentric perspective. It was at roughly the same time that Ludovico Di Breme put forward parallel, if not stronger Eurocentric ideas in his discussion of the first European Romantic Oriental tale, Lord Byron's *The Giaour* (1813).[30]

Ludovico Di Breme's *furor poetico*, or Byron's Romantic Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy

Like Berchet, Di Breme turned to England and the pan-European dimension of Orientalism in order to theorise about Italian Romanticism and nationalism. Unlike Berchet, who chose to translate and write an essay on

29 Berchet, *Sul dramma indiano*, p. 4.

30 George Gordon Byron, *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* (London: John Murray, 1813).

Jones' translation of *Sakuntala*, Di Breme opted only to write an essay, his *Osservazioni*, on Pellegrino Rossi's Italian translation of Byron's Oriental tale – *Il Giaurro* (1818).[31] In dealing with Byron's work, Di Breme was engaging with De Stäel's suggestion that Italians should make new European Romantic works known in Italy. Even more importantly, he was engaging with Jones' first codification of poetry – his poetics of passion and his ideas regarding history, climate, manners and the imitation of nature – via Byron, which the Italian transformed into his notion of *furor poetico* (poetic furor), or *il patetico* (the pathetic). In this section, I attempt to map the link between this notion of the pathetic and Romantic Orientalism in Risorgimento discourse and the Classicist–Romantic quarrel, while pointing to another expression of Eurocentric cosmopolitanism from the margins, this time not related to India or Indo-Europeanism, but to the broader notion of the Orient, as well as Ottomanism and Islam.

Di Breme, Romantic nationalism and modern European poetry

Di Breme was a Piedmontese liberal intellectual and writer, and a co-founder of the journal *Il Conciliatore*. A state councillor of the Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy between 1806 and 1809, he too played a prominent role in Risorgimento politics. His work as a whole reveals a liberal and progressive conception of history, in which he sees the expansion of perspectives and relationships between cultures as a sign of progress and civilisation.[32] Di Breme articulated his theorisation of Romanticism in three main works: *Intorno all'ingiustizia di alcuni giudizi letterari italiani* (1816), *Le grand commentaire sur un petit article* (1817), and *Osservazioni* (1818). *Le grand commentaire* is primarily a critique of Enlightenment rationalism and a re-evaluation of spirituality.

31 George Gordon Byron, *Il Giaurro. Frammento di novella turca*, trans. Pellegrino Rossi (Milan: Agnelli, 1818).

32 Giorgio Barberi Squarotti, 'Leopardi e Breme', in *Ludovico di Breme e il programma dei romantici italiani*, eds Carlo Pisichedda and Narciso Nada (Turin: Centro studi piemontesi, 1984), pp. 121–40 (122).

It is the other two works that are particularly relevant to my discussion. *Intorno* is a more general intervention in the Classicist–Romantic quarrel and Risorgimento discourse, whereas *Osservazioni* focuses on Byron's poem and offers a case study of Di Breme's reception of Romantic Orientalism.

Intorno was the first document to be produced by Di Breme in response to and in support of De Stäel's famous article about the state of Italian letters. In this piece, he emphasises, once again, the importance of translating European literature, pointing out, like Berchet, that this is not an invitation to emulate the European works translated into Italian, but, through a literary cosmopolitanism, to enter into exchange of ideas and culture with all European civilised nations. This would be a most powerful expedient for the new Italy in order to re-acquire some 'lodevole originalità' [praiseworthy originality]. For Di Breme, in contrast to the Classicists' claims, this is not a dangerous operation at all; on the contrary, the only danger of corruption of the national character of Italy is the imitation of classical (and primarily Greek) models, with fixed formulas and rules, which Di Breme sees as the cause of the indolence and stagnation in modern Italian literature.[33] Post-Enlightenment northern Europe had become a source of anxiety for Risorgimento Italians, who felt at the margins of European modernity and criticised for their modern stagnation. For Di Breme, European recognition of Italian cultural innovation was vital in order to find renewed influence in Europe. He acknowledged that Europe was however unfair as it did not render 'una filiale giustizia alla madre Italia' [enough filial justice to its mother Italy], thus emphasising both the traditional place of Italy as the cradle of European culture and its contemporary periphery. The solution for Di Breme was to engage with the latest currents of thought in Europe, so that Europe could reverse the order of judgement and argue in favour of contemporary Italian ingeniousness, philosophy and goodness.[34] Di Breme thus urges Italians to expand rather than restrict Italian poetics,

33 Ludovico Di Breme, *Intorno all'ingiustizia di alcuni giudizi letterari italiani* in *Polemiche*, ed. Carlo Calcaterra (Turin: Editrice Torinese, 1928), pp. 3–62 (11).

34 Di Breme, *Intorno*, p. 26.

to rejuvenate Italian creativity and literary aptitude and to become the 'Aristoteli dei tempi nostri' [Aristotles of our time] by imitating rather than aping the spontaneous concitation of the ancients (and not their literary formulas).[35] This spontaneous concitation, which is poetic furor and the essence of poetry, Di Breme was keen to stress, must to go hand in hand with contemporary life, in social, cultural, spiritual, scientific and political terms. Di Breme hoped that Italian writers would embrace the progressive spirit of the times and imitate nature in all its infinity and contradictions. This is the dimension of knowledge and awareness that modernity brought about and that the ancients lacked:

> se le nostre dottrine mistiche, morali, scientifiche, se i nostri usi, i recenti affetti nostri hanno ampliato di tanto il campo dell'invenzione, misuriamo noi tutta l'ampiezza di quell'orizzonte, lanciamoci in quella immensità, e tentiamo animosi le regioni dell'infinito che ci sono concedute. Così intende natura di essere imitata.
>
> [if our mystical, moral and scientific doctrines, our customs, and our recent progress have expanded the field of invention, let us measure the whole expansion of that horizon, let us launch ourselves into that immensity, and let us experience in a high-spirited way the regions of infinity that we have been conceded. This is how nature should be imitated.][36]

The expanded fields of invention or imagination had investigated the contradictory dynamics of nature, including those of the heart and the mind, in their infinity. This infinity was the result of the new cultural horizons of European modernity, which somehow also measured itself in relation to Oriental primitivism and despotism. There is a thin line, in fact, between the Romantic notions of infinity, modern consciousness and subjectivity on the one hand, and the Eurocentric conception of the Orient as a place of tyranny and extreme behaviour, on the other. It is with these questions in mind that Di Breme approached Byron and his poem *The Giaour* as the prototype of modern European poetry.

35 Di Breme, *Intorno*, p. 14.
36 Di Breme, *Intorno*, p. 44.

Byron and the Romantic Orient in Italy

According to Arnold Anthony Schmidt, Lord Byron became 'a prominent inspiration of the Risorgimento' as a result of his writings and his stay and activities in Italy from 1816 onwards. The list of people he influenced is long and ranges from Giuseppe Mazzini and Giuseppe Garibaldi to Ugo Foscolo and Domenico Guerrazzi, to name just a few. His public reputation and political views as a supporter of Italian unification quickly brought him to the attention of the Austrian and Papal police and he was often under surveillance from 1816 onwards.[37] As Richard Cronin has noted, together with Greece, Italy was one of the arenas in which Byron 'could comfortably address himself to political realities' as in these 'pre-industrial, neo-feudal societies, he could assume his preferred political role as champion of the people without compromising his aristocratic status'.[38] He was believed to have formed a secret sect in Bologna and was investigated by the Papal Secretary of State Cardinal Consalvi.[39] Eventually, Byron became involved in the *Carbonari* movement in 1821, and was particularly active in the Romagna rising against Papal rule.[40] As Edoardo Zuccato states, nationalists such as Mazzini turned Byron into a 'model of a fighter ready to sacrifice himself for independence whom Italian youths should imitate'.[41] But many Italian figures of the time, both on the literary and political side of the Risorgimento, appropriated some aspects of Byron while discarding others for their own ideological purposes. Crucially, Byron became a key topic in the Classicist–Romantic quarrel in Italy. As Zuccato puts it, the

37 Arnold Anthony Schmidt, *Byron and the Rhetoric of Italian Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2010), pp. 3, 25–6.

38 Richard Cronin, '*Casa Guidi Windows*: Elisabeth Barrett Browning, Italy and the Poetry of Citizenship', in *Unfolding the South: Nineteenth-Century British Women Writers and Artists in Italy*, ed. Alison Chapman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 35–50 (38).

39 Schmidt, *Byron*, p. 25.

40 Giorgio Melchiori, 'The Influence of Byron's Death on Italy', *The Byron Journal* [London], 5: 67–78 (68).

41 Edoardo Zuccato, 'The Fortunes of Byron in Italy (1810–70)', in *The Reception of Byron in Europe*, vol. I (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 80–97 (88).

translation of his works published around 1818–19 (*The Lament of Tasso*, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto IV, *Manfred*, *The Giaour*, *The Corsair*) became part of 'a battle in which a group of young, liberal writers fought against a dominant, suffocating Classicism, putting forward Romanticism as a new model'.[42]

Di Breme's engagement with Byron coincided with their encounter at Germaine De Stäel's salon in Coppet in 1816. After moving to Italy at around this time, Byron soon became acquainted with Federico Confalonieri, Silvio Pellico, Berchet and the Milan circle of *Il Conciliatore*, and the Romantics quickly appropriated him as a symbol for the Romantic movement and their struggle against the tyrannies of foreign domination and Classicism. In order to minimise and undermine the Italian Romantics' association with Byron, on the other hand, Italian Classicists claimed that he was a giant in comparison to them. Over time, they even went on to claim that there were Classicist elements in Byron's poetry. At the time of the appearance of Di Breme's essay on *The Giaour*, the English poem had been reviewed by a number of Classicists, such as Giuseppe Acerbi, who claimed that Rossi's translation was much clearer than the original, which for him was incomprehensible.[43] Other Classicists, like Francesco Pezzi, addressed the excessive sentimentalism of the poem and the strangeness or irrelevance of the ideas, stressing Byron's extravagance in choosing 'per tema de' suoi versi il frammento d'una novella orientale' [for his verses the fragments of an Oriental novella].[44]

Even Leopardi commented at length on the figure and work of Byron. Although he changed his views over time, his comments went from considering Byron 'one of the few genuine poets of our century' to judging his work as 'wildly obscure and confusing'.[45] There remained, for Leopardi,

42 Zuccato, 'The Fortunes of Byron in Italy', p. 80.

43 Giuseppe Acerbi, 'Il Giaurro di Lord Byron', in ed. Anco Murzio Mutterle, *Discussioni e polemiche*, pp. 249–51 (250).

44 Francesco Pezzi, 'Il "Giaurro" di Lord Byron', *Gazzetta di Milano*, January 1818, in Mutterle, ed., *Discussioni e polemiche*, pp. 252–3 (253).

45 Zuccato, 'The Fortunes of Byron in Italy', p. 87.

an element of excessiveness and artifice in Byron's poetry that he deemed harmful to the medium. This notion of harmfulness is one of the main criticisms Leopardi launched at Di Breme's theorisation of Romanticism through Byron's Oriental tale. Aside from Leopardi, whose attack on Di Breme is explored in detail in Chapter 3, both Classicists and Romantics generally liked the English poet, and while Byron would not take part in the heated debates concerning the literary quarrel, writers on both fronts eventually expressed admiration for him.[46]

Di Breme spells out his admiration for Byron early on in his *Osservazioni*, where he praises the English poet for his immortal career. Byron is indeed the maestro of poetic inclination Di Breme wished to introduce to Italian readers and writers. The Italian depicts Byron as the epitome of the Romantic poet (and even the greatest living poet) as he lists him among Moses and Homer. Di Breme also exploits Byron's stature and the poem *The Giaour* to prove a number of poetic questions at the heart of the Classicist–Romantic quarrel and Romantic nationalism, while attacking the Classicists. For instance, he contrasts the English poem with the poetics of Horace, creating a parallel between *The Giour*'s and Democritus' poetics. The 'ragion poetica' [poetic reason] of *The Giaour*, like that of Democritus, entailed an 'estremo grado di concitazione' [extreme degree of concitation], or a 'furor poetico' [poetic furor], understood by Plato and Cicero, and used by Aeschylus for his Prometheus. Considered the universal essence of poetry, as opposed to the imitation of classical mythology, such poetic furor, or the pathetic, is defined by Di Breme as 'un incessante, continuo di cuore e di immaginazione, per cui se anche non vi sia sempre luogo a un sublime ideale, non venga meno giammai la profondità della passione, e non cessi il poeta di ricercarti le viscere del sentimento' [an unceasing and continuous warmth of the heart and the imagination that, even if lacking a sublime ideal, will never lack depth of passion, and for which the poet will never stop searching for visceral sentiments].[47] For Di Breme, such profundity of feeling and passion is expressed in a particularly significant

46 Schmidt, *Byron*, pp. 25–6.

47 Ludovico Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', in *Polemiche*, ed. Carlo Calcaterra (Turin: Editrice Torinese, 1928), pp. 88–9.

way in *The Giaour* and its Oriental setting in relation to the wide universe of the human experience, as the experience of truth in all its infinity, and as the voice of nature that should inspire the poet, as opposed to the artificial rules of Neoclassical imitation.

In *Osservazioni*, Di Breme discusses the contradictory passions and ideals depicted in the poem: love and hatred, passion and violence, and desperation and redemption. The story of *The Giaour*, set in Turkish-ruled Greece, narrates through a number of disjointed fragments the love affair between a Greek renegade Christian, the Giaour (which means 'foreigner' or 'infidel' in Turkish), and Leila, the woman from the harem of the Muslim-Ottoman Hassan. When Hassan discovers Leila's treachery, he kills her by drowning her into the Aegean Sea. Hassan, however, is in turn ambushed and killed by the Giaour and his clan of Arnauts (Albanians). The renegade eventually finds shelter in a monastery where he spends the rest of his days dealing with his guilt and seeking redemption for Leila's loss and his terrible crime.

Di Breme thus proposes to explore the subject, plot, customs, passions and the ideal of this composition.[48] The setting of Turkish-ruled Greece and the question of Greek nationalism are elements that Di Breme considered relevant to the Italian Risorgimento. More importantly, *The Giaour*, for Di Breme, was useful because it shows that, out of a variety of extreme positive and negative experiences, harmony is created by exposing 'l'animo all'azione della Natura' [the human soul to the action of nature], that is, by depicting the human soul in all its 'vero infinito' [infinite truth] and through the 'armonie della natura' [harmonies of nature].[49] The pathetic, which consists in the profundity, ampleness and variety of feeling, is therefore compatible with 'tutti gli affetti e con tutte le idee' [all kinds of affections and ideas] possible in the human experience.

In discussing *The Giaour*, Di Breme was calling for a modern poetry for Italy that would embrace 'tutti i tempi, tutti i costumi e quante sono le immaginabili inflessioni dell'uman cuore' [all times, all customs and

48 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 89.

49 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', pp. 84, 92–3.

all imaginable inflexions of the human heart].[50] This is where the Orient served its purpose as a context imagined as opening up possibilities and inflexions of the human mind and heart. However, Di Breme's attitude towards the Orient is ambivalent, as we are soon to hear that the Orient is where 'tutto è celeste tranne il cuore dell'uomo' [all is blue [like the sky] except the human heart]. According to Di Breme, 'la regione d'Oriente' [the region of the Orient], which is the 'terra del sole' [the land of the sun], presents a contradiction whereby a most delightful sky and nature are coupled with the vilest human actions.[51] Di Breme juxtaposes the 'benefiche intenzioni della natura in pro di quelle contrade' [the beneficial intentions of nature in those lands] to the 'turpe opera dell'uomo in esse, il vil governo ch'ei ne fa, e i miseri destini a cui sono ridotte' [foul work of man, his vile rule of these lands, and the miserable destinies to which they are reduced].[52] Di Breme's comments on the Orient betray an essentialist attitude, whereby the Italian claims that the Orient is intrinsically despotic and barbaric, despite its great climate and pleasant nature. *The Giaour*, for Di Breme, mixes a little bitterness with the sensations which at first sight seem pleasant by sprinkling many 'dolcezze' [sweet things] over 'gli oggetti per sè dolorosi o spaventevoli, come la propria morte, o quella dei cari nostri, la lontananza di un'amante … l'ingiustizia degli uomini' [painful and frightening subjects, like one's own death, or the deaths of those who are dear to us, the distance from one's beloved … the injustice of men].[53] Was the Romantic Orient, then, only a pretext to stage the vilest human actions in far away lands naturally considered primitive by Europeans? And more to the point, was Byron's Romantic Orientalism perhaps simply a marketable literary genre that aroused great curiosity for dealing with the European Self by juxtaposing it with the Oriental Self? And finally, to what extent would Di Breme find Byron's Orientalism useful to address Italian Europeanness and modernity?

50 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 106.
51 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 116.
52 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 116.
53 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', pp. 94–5.

The allure of The Giaour *and Romantic Orientalism*

The allure of *The Giaour* in Italy coincided with the rise in popularity of the aesthetic of Romantic Orientalism in Europe. As Nigel Leask has pointed out, for Romantic writers, the trope of the Orient became a sort of imported luxury commodity and a literary product of the mercantilist economy of imperialism.[54] Leask refers to William Beckford's *The History of the Caliph Vathek* (1786) as the turning point between the eighteenth-century Oriental tale – which first grew popular in the wake of Antoine Galland's translation of *A Thousand and One Nights* (1704) and was further exemplified by works such as Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721) and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Citizen of the World* (1762) – and the Romantic Oriental tale, of which Byron became the champion.[55] Beckford's work, in part also influenced by Jones', proved influential for a number of key Romantic figures writing on the Orient – like Goethe, Coleridge, Hugo, Flaubert and Lamartine – due to the fact that Beckford's Orient, to put it in Mohammed Sharafuddin's words, 'became an opportunity for experience – certainly for intense personal fantasy and gratification'. *Vathek* in particular is 'the projection of an amoral, secret life into the public domain', giving the reins to the so-called 'outlawed self'.[56] Indeed, as Hsu-Ming Teo has shown, Beckford's 'outlawed self' is precisely what Byron celebrated in his Oriental tales, especially *The Giaour*. This 'Byronic hero', which in Byron's poem is embodied by the Giaour, is described by Teo as 'inherently aristocratic' but also 'troubled' and 'misunderstood by the wider world and rejected because of his crime of passion'. Crucially and more to the point, Teo makes a connection between crime and the Orient as she spells out that the Giaour's crimes were prompted mainly 'by the fervid heat and physical sensuality of the East'.[57]

54 Nigel Leask, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 21.

55 Leask, *British Romantic Writers*, p. 19

56 Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London and New York: Tauris, 1996), p. xxxii.

57 Teo, *Desert Passions*, pp. 50–2.

One crucial question Byron's Romantic Orientalism inherited from *Vathek* was the notion of ambivalence, embodied in the tale by the Giaour and his antagonist, as well as their treatment of women. *The Giaour* juxtaposes the Muslim Hassan with the Greek Giaour, and, even more importantly, Oriental polygamy with European monogamy. While Byron raised questions about the cruelty of the actions of the two men, and also their different attitudes towards women, he remained unforgiving towards both of them. Teo hints that, in Byron's construction of the character of the European Giaour, as the closing verses of the poem in fact reveal, 'the ideal of courtly love celebrated by European poets is more honoured in the breach than in observance'. As the Giaour confesses his crime to the monk in the monastery, he says:

> With havock I have marked my way: / But this was taught me by the dove, / To die – and know not second love. / This lesson yet hath man to learn, / Taught by the thing he dares to spurn: / The bird that sings within the brake, / The swan that swims upon the lake, / One mate, and one alone, will take.[58]

If the 'lesson yet hath man to learn' applies to the Muslim Hassan, Teo goes on to argue, 'the universal use of "man" implies that Europeans too have yet to understand and practice not merely monogamy, but single-minded and single-hearted devotion to only one lover throughout an entire lifetime'.[59] Clearly Byron was playing with stereotypes, but the binaries of East and West are not so clear cut in a Saidian sense, and there is a great deal of ambiguity and ambivalence in the depiction of the outlawed hero. Similarly, the cruelty displayed by the Muslim Hassan is not simply juxtaposed with the nobility of the Giaour, as the latter admits that had he been betrayed by Leila, he would have murdered her too.[60] In short, although Byron pointed to some of the stereotypes concerning Oriental despotism and cruelty, especially towards women, he was also attacking Europeans, who were not ultimately depicted in stark contrast to Orientals.

58 Lord Byron, *The Giaour*, ll. 1164–71.
59 Teo, *Desert Passions*, p. 53.
60 Lord Byron, *The Giaour*, ll. 1061–9.

The Giaour became an exemplar of Romantic Orientalism and made the new aesthetic trend fashionable among writers and popular among readers. By 1813, as David Duff explains, Byron was at the peak of his fame, and he and his publisher were aware that 'orientalism, metrical romance, and the fragment were three fashionable literary commodities the combination of which was likely to create another winning formula – as indeed it did'.[61] It is also interesting to note that after the success of *The Giaour*, on the suggestion of none other than Madame De Stäel, and on the basis of the geographical co-ordinates of the literary market forces, Byron encouraged Thomas Moore to continue with his plan to write an Oriental tale. In a letter to Moore in August 1813, Byron wrote: 'Stick to the East; – the oracle, [Madame de] Stäel, told me it was the only poetical policy. The North, South and West have all been exhausted; but from the East we have nothing but S[outhe]'s unsaleables'.[62] By 1815, only two years after its publication, there had already been fourteen English editions of *The Giaour* and it was hugely popular throughout Europe. Romantic Orientalism was an extremely popular genre in Europe, and Byron composed other Turkish tales, such as *The Bride of Abydos* in 1813 and *The Corsair* in 1814, which brought him further success.[63] Contemporaries of Byron, also influenced by Jones and Orientalism, include Robert Southey, author of *The Curse of Kehama* (1810), and Thomas Moore, author of *Lalla Rookh* (1817), and Percy Shelley, who wrote *Revolt of Islam* (1818).

The winning formula for *The Giaour*, in line with its ambiguity, was its alleged Islamic point of view, through the use of the fragment, as the villain here is more the renegade Christian than the Muslim Hassan (although poligamy and despotism are implicit, intrinsic problems). As Peter Cochran

61 David Duff, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 150.

62 Moore letters, quoted in Allan Gregory, 'Thomas Moore's Orientalism', in Cochran, ed., *Byron and Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 177–87 (178).

63 It is interesting to note that the poem *The Corsair* also inspired Giuseppe Verdi's *Il Corsaro* (1848), while Italy had in Gioacchino Rossini one of the more important composers of Romantic operatic Orientalism, with operas such as *L'italiana in Algieri* (1813), *Il turco in Italia* (1814), *Mosè in Egitto* (1818), *Maometto secondo* (1820).

points out, the fragmented narration occurs from different points of view, thus making the tale seem incomplete and rather cryptic and leaving the reader wondering about certain aspects of the triangle joining the characters of the tale (i.e. the background of the Giaour, the parting of Leila and the Giaour and Hassan's pursuit of Leila).[64] Byron, Cochran continues, was keen to offer 'local colour' in his Eastern poems. However, the result is partly a forgery of Islam, as it is known that Byron liked to shock his audience, and in so doing, he offered a '*faux*-Islam, a marketable literary construct first and an authentic record and meditation some way second'.[65] This is an important element to bear in mind when analysing Leopardi's reaction to Di Breme's *Osservazioni*, as Leopardi considered Romantic Orientalism to be a marketable, modern literary fashion characterised by poetic excess. It is now crucial to examine Di Breme's use of Byron's anti-Classicist Orientalism before exploring how Leopardi reacted to it.

Di Breme's Orient and the death of ancient Greece

The Orient depicted in *The Giaour* by Byron is associated with a contemporary dead Greece. Di Breme found the juxtaposition of contemporary Ottoman Greece in its modern decadence with the ghost of a glorious ancient Greece very useful to his argument about the irrelevance of Classicism to modern poetry. In other words, in the same way Ottoman Greece made the glories of ancient Greece irrelevant to the current Greek condition, so for Di Breme Classicism was irrelevant to any discussion of modern poetry. Ottoman Greece was thus more useful to discuss Romanticism and Orientalism than Classicism.

It is useful to look at the opening stanza of the poem, in which Byron describes an image of Ottoman Athens, where none of the former glory of ancient Athens as a temple of culture and beauty is visible:

64 Peter Cochran, 'Introduction: Byron's Orientalism', in P. Cochran, ed., *Byron and Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 1–153 (52).

65 Cochran, 'Introduction', p. 16.

No breath of air to break the wave
That rolls below the Athenian's grave,
That tomb which, gleaming o'er the cliff,
First greets the homeward-veering skiff,
High o'er the land he saved in vain –
When such hero shall live again?

Rossi's translation reads as follows:

L'aer taceva, e il mar co' venti in pace
Lambiva umile il pie' del sacro avello
U' del grande d'Atene il cener giace
Dalla rupe in che appar splendente e bello
Par ch'ei primo saluti il buon nocchiero
Che rivolge la nave al dolce ostello.

The hero is referred to as Themistocles, who led the Athenian resistance to the Persian invasion of Greece in 480–479 BC, and the reference establishes a contrast with the contemporary occupation of Greece by the Ottomans. Di Breme is keen to exploit this contrast between ancient Greek glory and contemporary Greek misery – as Greece is now subjugated to Ottoman despotism – in order to substantiate his point about the despotic Orient and its foul heart, as well as the irrelevance of the imitation of classical mythology in contemporary poetry. Di Breme particularly praises how Byron created harmony out of the 'opposte fortune della Grecia' [opposed fortunes of Greece]. Although the Italian emphasises how Lord Byron contemplates the voloptuous nature of those Greek beaches, he also stresses that 'le sorti civili e i fasti' [the civil fate and the pomp] of the ancient past are now represented by a few sumptuous ruins. In contemporary Ottoman Greece, all you could see is how 'la ignoranza, lo squallore, il servaggio colle altre miserevoli conseguenze della tirannide ingombrano la ragione' [ignorance, squallor, servitude, with the other consequences of tyranny, clutter reason].[66] Indeed, Di Breme uses the translated passage to illuminate his conception of the *patetico*, which concerns the images in the passage, in which nature dominates and all the contrasting elements (i.e. ancient

66 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 100.

civilisation and contemporary barbarism) blend harmoniously and become a stream of feeling:

> Ecco un fascio d'idee e d'immagini; l'essenziale era di farle insieme armonizzare: ciò conseguito, la forma del loro collegamento sarà da reputarsi ottima in grazia dell'effetto; mentre in se stesse … non sono che inezie affatto indifferenti. Ora domanderò se una tale … elaborazione sull'anima del lettore … non sia l'unica e suprema regola psicologica, e se la poesia moderna abbia o no ragione di non riconoscerne qui delle altre?
>
> [Here is a bundle of ideas and images; the essential thing was to make them harmonious: once this was achieved, the way in which they are connected will be considered great as a result of the effect; while each one taken by itself … is but a dissimilar trifle. Now I will ask if the impact of such … a harmonious bundle on the soul of the reader … is not the only and supreme psychological rule, and if modern poetry is not more recognisable in this poem than in others?][67]

In order to illustrate further the essence of this stream of thought and feeling, Di Breme reflects on the narrator of the poem and explains that 'egli è nessuno. Egli è il pensiero, egli è il sentimento umano, egli è la natura poetica in quell'ora, in quel luogo, e sotto l'influsso di quelle circostanze' [he is nobody. He is thought, he is human sentiment, he is poetic nature at that time, in that place, and under the influence of certain circumstances].[68] This is the *Orientalist poetic furor*: to express human feeling and thinking by harmoniously blending all contrasting and extreme elements of life and nature through subjectivity – something classical mythology did not do.

Crucially, the poem is illustrative of the different gradations of human passion, and the dissonant aspects of life, depicted in the representation of a harmonious nature inspired by the Persian tale of the love between the nightingale and the rose – one of the tales translated by Jones. Indeed, Byron had borrowed two of Jones' translations published in *Poems*: 'A Turkish Ode of Mesihi' and 'A Persian Song of Hafiz'. It is Byron himself who, in a note to the 'Sultana of the Nightingale' in the poem, tells us that 'the attachment of the nightingale to the rose is a well-known Persian fable'.[69]

67 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 100.
68 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 102.
69 Byron, *The Giaour*, l. 22.

As Abu Taher Mojumder has shown, Byron's use of this fable is 'in keeping with the Persian tradition, in which the nightingale is considered as the lover and the rose as the beloved'.[70] Di Breme chose to comment on one of the passages from *The Giaour* based on Jones' translations of Persian poetry in order to support his argument about the pathetic and its relationship with the Orient and nature. As Di Breme puts it:

> Byron ha contemperato in questa ... i più efficaci prestigi orientali. Spira dal suo carme un voluttuoso e inebriante olezzo, che invade, per così dire, la fantasia, e te la fa nuotare in quel beato letargo nel quale immersi, qui molli turbantati aspettano pazientemente di salire in grembo alle loro Houris ... (le compagne eterne del paradiso maomettano) .... Dalla Persia è venuta un'amabile novella che racconta degli amori dell'usignolo colla rosa. Byron non se l'è lasciata sfuggire.
>
> [Byron adopted in this poem ... the most effective and fanciful Oriental characteristics. A voluptuous and stirring scent blows from it and permeates one's own fantasy and makes it swim in that blissful lethargy in which Muslim men with turbans are immersed, patiently waiting to ascend into the bosom of their Houris ... (the everlasting female companions of Mohammedan paradise) .... From Persia there came a lovely novella which narrates the nightingale's love with a rose. Byron did not let it escape him.][71]

The Orient (despite the vile actions of its people) is thus the source of a voluptuous and inebriating breeze that permeates fantasy and inspires the Romantic imagination, especially in its mythical declination as harmony between man and nature. The story of the rose and the nightingale is a metaphor for love, and for nature as life in all its guises, in Di Breme's theorisations. A central aspect Di Breme's criticism of Classicism concerned, in fact, the way in which classical mythology had humanised natural phenomena. According to Di Breme, if nature is life in all its guises, nature can be used by the imagination to represent feelings. This is the basis of the poetic power of humans. However, as natural phenomena are given human shapes in classical mythology, humans are deprived of their

70 Abu Taher Mojumder, *Sir William Jones, The Romantics and The Victorians* (Dacca: Begum Zakia Sultana, 1976), p. 32.

71 Di Breme, 'Osservazioni', p. 102.

poetic potential as phenomena become uniform, and the richness of life is no longer interpreted in all its possible forms, but only in human ones. Thus he comments on how the *fragrance* attributed to the *sigh* of the rose is an opportunity to 'dimostrare per un nuovo lato la vanità poetica della mitologia' [demonstrate from a new angle the poetical vanity of [classical] mythology], especially in relation to 'quella che ho fin qua chiamato poesia moderna' [that which I have thus far called *modern* poetry].

Di Breme's ultimate point, which concludes his attack on Classicism via the Orient, is that this *Oriental poetic tradition* embodies the concept of nature as life in all its guises, in contrast to the process of personification of classical mythology. Di Breme exhibits no ambiguity when he states that, 'La natura è vita: vita modificata in migliaia di guise' [Nature is life: life modified in all its guises]. If all is life, Di Breme maintains that poetry should be able to represent consciousness and the feeling of subjectivity in each element of nature. According to Di Breme, this poetic attitude was never adopted in classical mythology, which through its practice of humanising phenomena impoverished poetics.

As Renata Cotrone argues, *il patetico* was, for Di Breme, a psychological-stylistic device which enabled the poet to represent all that exists, including the elements of collision and the negative. It was a device that dissolved the regularity of the classical model: it was a dissonant style, but only because it engaged with a different, more rigorous and intense harmony. The engagement with subjectivity implied the consideration of every aspect of it, including evil, conflict and the corruption of reality, provided they are significant to and indicative of an abnormal psychological and existential state, which pointed to the profundity of the tragic and the anti-climactic nature of emotionally satisfying situations. Cotrone states that Di Breme attempted to legitimate the 'dimensione del negativo' [dimension of the negative] within the aesthetic realm: if writing was to represent all aspects of life, including conflict, then it must visualise its foundational energy by giving form and expression to 'figure di dissonanza' [figures of dissonance], such as revenge, murder, guilt and expiation. The protagonist expressed the ultimate power of the inner being: as he embraced his own defeat, he realised his vocation. He did not withdraw from the hardest tests of the negative; he faced the ultimate pain and found that there was complacency

in the spectacularisation of evil.[72] Such a fascination for the negative was, for Byron and Di Breme, somewhat linked to modern man's dissatisfaction with science and reason, and the return to the primordial state of nature in the Orient, where harmony between man and nature could be recreated. This is the major allure of the Oriental tale, along with the novelty of its aesthetic forgery and excess, and, as seen with Berchet, the indigeneity of the Oriental local colour. If Europe provided modern subjectivity, in short, the Orient was the natural setting for the extreme inflexions of the heart and the mind. Though ambivalent, the dichotomy between Europe and the Orient was still useful for Di Breme to discuss Europeanness in relation to Risorgimento Italy. However, Di Breme's essay on Byron's poem was fiercely attacked by Leopardi. The dispute between the two figures constituted the core of the Classicist–Romantic quarrel in Risorgimento discourse, and Orientalism was one of the key elements in this dispute.

72 Renata Cotrone, *Romanticismo italiano: Prospettive critiche e percorsi intellettuali di Breme, Visconti e Scalvini* (Manduria: Lacaita, 1996), pp. 112–13.

CHAPTER 3

Negative Orientalism: Giacomo Leopardi's Neoclassical-Romantic Protest Against European Modernity

In 1818, Giacomo Leopardi wrote a response to Di Breme's *Osservazioni* in an essay entitled *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica*.[1] Leopardi did not publish the essay during his lifetime, and as he came to embrace many aspects of Romanticism in his work, his critique of Romanticism in this 1818 piece cannot be taken as indicative of his overall view of Romanticism. The *Discorso di un italiano* was not published until 1904, but it nevertheless expresses many of Leopardi's views on Romanticism at the time of the Classicist-Romantic quarrel, including his resentment in response to the Romantics' attack on classical antiquity and their form of Romantic nationalism inspired by European Orientalism. Leopardi, of course, also reacted with hostility to the Romantic enthusiasm for northern European, native American and folk literatures. He constructed his rejection of Romanticism by juxtaposing an 'Italian' literary tradition, which also included Greek and Latin literatures, and the 'foreign' or 'barbarous', but global, trends of Romanticism:

> Che dirò delle favole barbare sostituite dai nostri riformatori in luogo di quelle greche? ... quando il poeta europeo si serve di esse favole [greche] e usa quell'idioma favoloso, o anche n'abusa, eccetto se l'abuso non fosse enorme, è inteso da tutti coloro

1 An earlier version of the title of this work, as Leopardi writes in the 'warning' at the end of the piece, was 'Intorno alle Osservazioni del Cavaliere Lodovico di Breme sulla poesia moderna' [On the Observations of Cavaliere Lodovico Di Breme on Modern Poetry]. See Giacomo Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica*, in *Tutte le opere*, ed., W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 914–48 (948).

> fra' i quali ed a' quali canta; ma le favole settentrionali orientali americane quanti le sanno o se ne curano? ... finalmente ch'i poemi si trascinino dietro le loro note e le loro chiose, e questo senza fallo ammazzerà la pedanteria, giacchè sapete bene che un commento lastricato, per esempio, di pezzi dell'Edda maggiore o minore, o *dell'Alcorano o di Ferdosi o dei Purana o del Ramaiana o del Megaduta*, non sarebbe mica pedantesco, ma seminato di versi d'Omero o di Virgilio o di Dante, si bene perchè la pedanteria sta essenzialmente e immobilmente fitta e radicata nelle cose greche e latine e italiane.
>
> [What shall I say of the barbarian fables with which our reformers have replaced the Greek ones? ... when the European poet uses those fables and that fabulous idiom, and even if he should abuse them, except in the case of excessive abuse, he is understood by all among whom and to whom he sings – but how many people know or care about Northern Oriental and American fables? ... finally, poems should go about dragging behind them footnotes and their glosses, and this will, without fail, kill pedantry – since you know well that a commentary paved, for instance, with excerpts from the *Poetic Edda*, and the *Edda minora*, from the *Quran* or from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* or from the *Puranas* or from the *Ramayana* or from the *Meghadūta* would not be considered pedantic at all, but one strewn with lines from Homer, Virgil or Dante would surely be, because pedantry is essentially and immovably fixed and rooted in Greek and Latin and Italian things.][2]

This passage displays the geographical co-ordinates of the Classicist–Romantic dispute in Risorgimento discourse: Leopardi grouped together the Oriental, northern and American fables – the new worldwide dimension of literature that developed in the wake of Orientalism, as Mufti demonstrates, often used in Romantic nationalism – and set them against Greek, Latin and Italian 'things', that is, what Leopardi considered the national literary tradition of Italy (i.e. Neoclassical nationalism). These two geographical co-ordinates of aesthetic nationalism – the cosmopolitan Romantic, *and* the Graeco-Roman-Italian Classicist – map the two identity co-ordinates of the northern Oriental renaissance versus the southern Classical Renaissance

2 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 940 (my italics). English translation: *Discourse of an Italian on Romantic Poetry*, by G. Sims ad F. Camilletti, in Fabio Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism in Italian Literature: Leopardi's Discourse on Romantic Poetry* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), pp. 113–73 (159–60).

with which Italian rebirth and modernity were discussed in Risorgimento Italy. It is not difficult to detect Leopardi's annoyance towards his fellow countrymen on the Romantic side, who accused the Graeco-Roman and Italian tradition of pedantry. Similarly, the mention of the Arabic, Persian and Indian texts – some of which underpinned the Oriental renaissance – betrays an unambiguous degree of hostility towards Romantic Orientalism. Leopardi's anti-Romantic and anti-Orientalist attitude in the *Discorso di un italiano* reflects the more nationalist phase – albeit short-lived – in the poet's development and, more broadly, can be considered part of the Classicist reaction to the northern European imposition of Romanticism on Italian letters.

However, after this initial attack on Romanticism and Orientalism, in his later writings Leopardi went on to engage with and appropriate in an ironic but also polemical way Romantic Orientalism, which led to a unique form of poetic Orientalism on the European stage: a form of negative Orientalism which he developed fully in his 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia' (1830). In order to map the stages of these dynamics of appropriation and subversion, it is useful to consider, alongside the *Discorso*, some of the notes Leopardi made in his *Zibaldone* of thoughts, as well as one of his *Operette morali*, the 'Cantico del Gallo Silvestre' (1824) and, crucially, his celebrated 'Canto notturno'. More specifically, I aim to trace the development of Leopardi's engagement with Orientalism by paying attention to how he responded to claims of the harmonious in nature, especially as advocated by Di Breme, and how he appropriated certain poetic images of Romantic Orientalism in order to stage an 'existentialist' form of Romantic Orientalism. I argue that Leopardi's versions of Oriental tales feature what Antonio Prete has called Leopardi's 'antropologia negativa' [negative anthropology],[3] an anti-anthropomorphist and anti-humanist vision of the alienation between humans and a nature stripped of its sacredness and enchantment. By focusing in particular on the Neoclassical–Orientalist hybrid poem 'Canto notturno', I consider Leopardi's ambiguous attitude towards Romantic Orientalism not as a

3 Antonio Prete, *Il pensiero poetante. Saggio su Leopardi* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1988), p. 162.

mere reaction to the Classicist–Romantic quarrel and a form of aesthetic nationalism, but as an example of a sophisticated counter-hegemonic attitude towards the philosophical and – critically – spiritual discourses of European Romanticism, especially those informed by the Oriental renaissance and the new notions of European modernity that stemmed from it.

Leopardi and the Oriental renaissance: Thoughts on antiquities, barbarism and aesthetics

A towering figure in nineteenth-century European culture and thought, as well as a classical philologist and one of the greatest poets ever to write in Italian, Leopardi could read and write in various ancient languages, from Greek and Latin to Hebrew. However, he never learned any of the Oriental languages that were revived or 'discovered' by the Oriental renaissance – Arabic, Chinese, Persian and Sanskrit. Given the fashionable status that these languages and cultures seemed to have acquired by the turn of the nineteenth century, it is no surprise that a philologist such as Leopardi read and wrote about them extensively. A recent volume entitled *Leopardi e l'Oriente* (1998) has highlighted Leopardi's great interest in the Orient, and the essays in the collection clearly demonstrate that the poet from Recanati never really spoke enthusiastically about these cultures and civilisations. From the Chinese to the Islamic, and from the Indian even to the Hebrew occasionally, Leopardi found all of these civilisations, to varying degrees and in different ways, 'barbarous', particularly when compared to Graeco-Roman, but especially Greek, civilisation.

Piero Corradini, for instance, shows that Leopardi thought that the Chinese were barbarous because they had never conformed themselves to nature.[4] Moreover, Valentina Colombo points out that, having

4 Piero Corradini, 'Leopardi di fronte alla civiltà cinese', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente: Atti del Convegno internazionale*, ed. Filippo Mignini (Macerata: Assessorato alla cultura

familiarised himself with many eighteenth-century texts on the life of Mohammed – such as Humphrey Prideaux's *The Life of Mahomet* (1697), Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* (1721) and Voltaire's *Le fanatisme, ou Mahomet le Prophète* (1736) – Leopardi commented on Mohammed's life in the *Zibaldone*: he considered the Muslim prophet and Islam as barbarous and commented on how, from the point of view of Islam as a religion, Mohammed, by means of the illusion of an afterlife, was eventually able to lead the Arabs to the 'imprese che tutti sanno' [the enterprises that everybody knows].[5] Colombo even mentions the 'Canto notturno' and goes so far as to compare it to the Persian poem *Matthnawi*, by the medieval poet Galal al-Din al-Rumi, in order to highlight parallels between the use of natural imagery in the two poems, and the parallels between the shepherd and the moon in particular.[6] While Colombo does not claim that Leopardi was inspired by the Persian poem, or that he knew it at all, she comments on the interesting similarities between them. She also mentions the presence of the work of the Persian poet Firdusi – a poet Jones had translated – in Leopardi's library. Similarly, Ariel Rathaus has explored Leopardi's changing views of Hebrew culture and, more importantly, the Bible. On the one hand, Rathaus shows that the Bible is praised for its 'immaginazione orientale' [Oriental imagination], as well as for its 'immaginazione antichissima' [very ancient imagination], which function as a source of inspiration (especially in the 'Cantico'. On the other hand, however, she explains that Leopardi often addressed biblical passages with sarcasm by making reference to a 'gusto orientale' [Oriental taste] and the presence of 'metaforone e traslatoni e cose eccessive' [big metaphors and translations and excessive things].[7] Even more

---

provincial di Macerata, 1998), pp. 191–8 (194). This essay gives a detailed account of all the elements that Leopardi used to define Chinese civilisation as barbarous when compared with Graeco-Roman civilisation in particular.

5 Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in Valentina Colombo, 'L'Islam filtrato in Leopardi', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente*, pp. 87–96 (92).

6 See Colombo, 'L'Islam filtrato da Leopardi', pp. 94–6.

7 Ariel Rathaus, 'Temi ebraici in Leopardi e presenza leopardiana in Israele', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente*, pp. 37–52 (44–5).

interestingly, Rathaus compares the Jewish writers of the 'Cantico' and the 'Kirkis' of the 'Canto notturno', thus alluding to Leopardi's gradual development of a generally ambivalent attitude to the Orient. Rathaus does not go into much detail, but indicates that on various occasions Leopardi mentioned the Bible as one the greatest poetic models, along with Homer.[8]

While Rathaus' reference to Leopardi's ambivalence is a useful starting point, it seems to me that it is necessary to determine Leopardi's reactions and engagement with the Orient in the context of the Italian reception of the Oriental renaissance. I argue that the emphasis Leopardi put on Greek and Hebrew antiquities is a direct result of his response to the way in which, according to the logic of the Oriental renaissance, Sanskrit and other Oriental cultures and antiquities suddenly replaced the Hebrew and Graeco-Roman models (Hebrew and biblical studies was the older form of Orientalism that the Oriental renaissance sought to challenge). Once considered a reaction to the new Orientalism, Leopardi's 'negative' engagement with the Orient suddenly looks more like a sceptical response to new hierarchies of antiquity and modernity proposed by the Oriental renaissance and its anti-Classicist Romanticism.

Leopardi's Indo-European scepticism

Most of what Leopardi knew of the Oriental renaissance and the new Indic texts, he had learned from reading Orientalist, literary, historical and philosophical works in English, French and German, as well as the Italian journals of the time, besides *Il Conciliatore*, such as the *Giornale enciclopedico di Napoli*, the *Biblioteca Italiana*, the *Annali di Scienze e Lettere* and the *Spettatore* of Milan, in which excerpts from such European works were reprinted. It is in these journals that Leopardi first read of Jones and his claim regarding the affinities between Greek,

8 Rathaus, 'Temi ebraici', p. 46.

Latin and Sanskrit. He made some notes on the topic in his *Zibaldone* on 11 April 1821:

> La lingua Sascrita, quell'antichissima lingua Indiana … che Sir William (Guglielmo) Jones 'non dubitò di dichiarare essere più perfetta della Greca, più copiosa della Latina, e dell'una e dell'altra più sapientemente raffinata'; quella lingua dalla quale è opinione di alcuni dotti inglesi del nostro secolo, … che sieno derivate, o abbiano avuto origine comune con lei, le lingue Greca, Latina, Gotica, e l'antica Egiziana o Etiopica (come pure i culti popolari primitivi di tutte queste nazioni).
>
> [Sanskrit, that venerable Indian language … that Sir William Jones 'has not scrupled to call "more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more excellently refined than either"'; that language from which, in the opinion of some English scholars of our century … the Greek, Latin, Gothic, and ancient Egyptian or Ethiopian languages were derived (along with the early popular religious systems of all these nations), or with which they shared a common origin].[9]

Although Leopardi mentions the possibility of these languages having a common origin, he is not convinced by the idea and refrains from making specific comments. His interest in Sanskrit was not the result of the enthusiasm of discovery, but rather a reaction to the *excessive* enthusiasm that this discovery had evoked in Europe. For instance, Leopardi does not allow for the possibility that Sanskrit could be a more perfect language than Greek, as

9 Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, ed. W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1969), ii, p. 268. For a detailed account of Leopardi's 'second-hand' interest in Sanskrit, with particular reference to the work of British Orientalists such as William Jones and Alexander Hamilton, see David Gibbons, 'Philological Cosmopolitanism and European Nationalisms: The Background to Leopardi's Sanskrit References', in P. Cori and F. Camilletti, eds, *Ten Steps: Critical Enquiries on Leopardi* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 121–45. The article emphasises the contradictions between the cosmopolitan quality of comparative philology and the ways in which it was appropriated by European nationalisms. As Gibbons himself puts it, 'the Sanskrit philology available to Leopardi … shows … the extent to which European national identities themselves were being imagined through the enterprise of comparative linguistics, rather than being superseded or transcended' (p. 144). The translation of the passage is taken from M. Caesar and F. D'Intino, eds, *Zibaldone: The Notebooks of Leopardi* (London: Penguin, 2013), p. 438.

Jones had asserted in his inaugural lecture for the Calcutta Asiatic Society. Later on in the *Zibaldone*, he writes of Sanskrit:

> Che una lingua per ricca, varia, libera, vasta, potente, pieghevole, docile, duttilissima ch'ella sia, possa ricevere, non solo l'impronta di altre lingue, ma per così dir, tutte intiere in se stessa tutte le altre lingue; … delle lingue teutoniche, slave, orientali, americane, indiane; questo, dico, non può umanamente accadere, se non in una lingua che non abbia carattere. Non è accaduto alla greca ch'è stata ed è la più libera, vasta e potente ….
>
> [That a language, no matter how rich, various, free, vast, powerful, flexible, tame and malleable it may be, can receive not only the impress of other languages but, so to speak, the entirety of all other languages into itself; … of the Teutonic, Slavic, Oriental, American, Indian languages; such a thing, I maintain, cannot humanly happen, save in a language that does not have character. It has not happened with Greek, which has been and is the most free, vast, and powerful … .][10]

Leopardi is partly reacting against the northern European hierarchisation of ancient languages as a result of the 'discovery' of Sanskrit, at the expense of both Greek and Hebrew languages. As Pascale Casanova has demonstrated in the case of Leopardi's reaction to the hierarchisation of the modern languages of Europe, and the predominance of French in European affairs, Leopardi carried out a 'national struggle' in the attempt to re-habilitate Italian as a major European language, as at the time of the Italian Renaissance, at the expense of French.[11] I would argue that it is indeed in the same mode, and to a significant extent with the same national struggle in mind, that Leopardi carried out his struggle for the Greek and Hebrew languages (and cultures), at the expense of Sanskrit and Orientalism at large.

10 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 718. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 1179. Leopardi is here responding to the claims made by Sir William Jones in his address for the celebration of the anniversary of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta in 1784: 'The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity…', Sir William Jones, *The Works of Sir William Jones*, 13 vols (London: Stockdale and Walker, 1807), iii, pp. 34–5.

11 See Pascale Casanova, 'What Is a Dominant Language: Giacomo Leopardi: Theoretician of Linguistic Inequality', in *New Literary History*, vol. 44, no. 3, Summer 2013, pp. 379–99.

The middling civilisation of classical antiquity: Happiness and nature

Greece and classical antiquity, rather than the Orient, remain for Leopardi the model *par excellence*, the ideal age. He believed that classical antiquity was closer to an uncorrupted nature (antiquity as the youth of mankind) in a Rousseauesque sense, rather than in a traditional Classicist sense.[12] This nostalgia for the state of nature, and the polemic against the Classicist excess of rationalism (which resulted in the loss of innocence and 'modern unhappiness'), however, did not lead him to seek religious or spiritual alternatives. On the contrary, he rejected all the spiritual currents of his time, especially those linked to the Orient and the European Middle Ages. For the Romantics, Leopardi argued, the ideal age was not the state of nature but the return of barbarism: the Orient, whether ancient or contemporary; and the Middle Ages of Christianity. Leopardi rejected these ages and civilisations as barbarous and corrupt. He made a distinction between the state of nature and barbarism: he addressed the first as a 'healthy primitivism' and associated it with classical antiquity and the idea of 'magnanimous illusions' (*magnanime illusioni*); and the second as 'corruption', which he linked to the Orient and the Middle Ages, whose superstitious character is contrary to both nature and reason. Leopardi called the civilisation of healthy primitivism a middling civilisation (*civiltà mezzana*).[13] This is not absolute primitivism, which is the state that he associated with the barbarism of Orientals, but a higher stage, partly characterised by reason:

> Quindi è dopo lo stato precisamente naturale, il più felice possibile in questa vita, è quello di una civilità media, dove un certo equilibrio fra la ragione e la natura, una certa mezzana ignoranza, mantengano quanto è possibile delle credenze e errori naturali … e … scaccino gli errori artifiziali … importanti e barbarizzanti.
>
> [So it is that, after the precisely natural state, the happiest state possible in this life is that of a middling civilisation, in which a certain balance between reason

12 Mario Fubini, *Romanticismo italiano: saggi di storia della critica e della letteratura* (Bari: Laterza, 1953), p. 87.

13 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 153.

> and nature, a certain middling ignorance, preserves natural beliefs and errors as much as possible ... and ... drives away artificial errors, ... the most important and barbarising of them.][14]

This middling stage is marked by 'errors' but not by 'superstitions', and Leopardi associated it with classical antiquity. It is a phase neither of full knowledge, like the phase that followed it, nor one of full ignorance, like the one that preceded it, and the distinction between errors and superstitions is an important one: if *errors* are the illusions created by nature and therefore stimulating and inviting action, *superstitions* are more the result of the corruption of civilisation, of barbarism, and so they are not stimulating. Errors are caused by nature and are beneficial to humans; superstitions are caused by man and so are harmful to humans:

> altro è ignoranza naturale, altro ignoranza fattizia. Altro errori ispirati dalla natura, e perciò convenienti all'uomo e conducenti alla felicità; altro quelli fabbricati dall'uomo. Questi non conducono alla felicità, anzi all'opposto, com'essendo un'alterazione del suo stato naturale. ... Perciò le superstizioni, le barbarie ec. non conducono alla felicità ma all'infelicità.
>
> [natural ignorance is one thing, artificial ignorance another. The errors inspired by nature, and therefore appropriate to man, and conducive to happiness, are one thing, those fabricated by man are another. These lead not to happiness but, rather, to its opposite, as being a corruption of his natural state. ... Therefore, superstitions, barbarism, etc., lead not to happiness but to unhappiness.][15]

In short, for Leopardi, the middling civilisation, which is the happiest, has two antagonists: the barbarism of Orientals, which preceded it; and the excessive civilisation that followed it, leading up to modernity. With particular regard of Orientals, Leopardi explains that, as opposed to Greeks and Romans, they were in contrast to nature:

> Del rimanente per lo stesso motivo della barbarie de' bassi tempi, è opposta alla felicità e natura, la barbarie e ignoranza degli Asiatici generalmente, Barbareschi, Affricani,

14 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 153. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 245.
15 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 153. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 245.

> Maomettani, Persiani antichi dopo Ciro, Sibariti ...Così proporzionatamente quella della Spagna e simili più moderne ed europee.
>
> [the barbarism and ignorance of the Asian people in general, the Barbary Africans, Mohemmedans, ancient Persians after Cyrus, the Sybarites ... are contrary to happiness and nature for the same reason as the barbarism of late antiquity. Likewise proportionately for Spain and other more modern and European countries.][16]

Oriental, medieval and modern civilisations are thus corrupt and barbarous; classical antiquity is the ideal age, and the Classical Renaissance of Italy the second best moment in history as it is closely related to classical antiquity. Leopardi's discourse on Romanticism thus develops identity and aesthetic discourses based on a periodisation of history and a discussion of civilisation versus barbarism.

The periodisation of history: Classical civilisation versus Romantic barbarism

The problem of the periodisation of human history, a problem which fascinated Leopardi, was at the heart of nineteenth-century debates on Classicism and Romanticism. For the Romantics, the modern age had begun with Christianity, the fall of the Roman empire, and the death of paganism, and for some reason, they linked the Middle Ages to the Orient through alleged similarities between sensuous and spiritual poetry. For Leopardi, the modern age had begun with the Classical Renaissance, when classical civilisation was reborn after the 'barbarous' Middle Ages.[17] Orientalism and medievalism stand in opposition to a periodisation that

16 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 153. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 245.

17 Giacomo Leopardi, *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costume degli italiani*, in *Tutte le opere*, ii, pp. 966–84 (978). Leopardi in this *Discorso* pays particular attention to the idea of differences between northern and southern Europe and, following De Stäel, he too claims that the modern age is a northern age as antiquity was a southern one (p. 983).

privileges those historical periods associated with the classically oriented Italian identity popular in Risorgimento Italy, which envisaged Italian unification on the basis of a third Italian rebirth, after classical Italy and Renaissance Italy. Although Leopardi's nationalism gradually waned in later years, he continued to favour Greek and Hebrew antiquities as the roots of classical humanism and in opposition to Romanticism and Orientalism throughout his work.

It is in the context of this periodisation of history that Leopardi is able to formulate his rejection of the Orient as 'barbarous'. The dichotomy between the Orient and classical antiquity was articulated by means of an identity discourse based on illusions versus superstitions. Leopardi compared classicial and Oriental antiquity in his *Zibaldone* on 4 April 1821, when he set the magnanimous illusion and the state of nature of the people of classical antiquity against the superstitions of the 'barbarous Orientals':

> E la causa per la quale i Greci e i Romani soprastanno a tutti i popoli antichi, è in gran parte questa, che i loro errori e illusioni furono nella massima parte conformissimi alla natura, sicchè si trovarono ugualmente lontano dall'ignoranza e dal difetto di questa. Al contrario dei popoli orientali le cui superstizioni ed errori, che sebbene moderni e presenti, si trovano per lo più di antichissima data, furono e sono in gran parte contrarie alla natura, e quindi con verità si possono chiamar barbare.
>
> [And if the Greeks and the Romans tower above all the peoples of antiquity it is in large part because their errors and illusions were in the main very much in accord with nature, so that they were equally distant from the corruption of ignorance and from its lack. By contrast with Eastern people whose superstitions and errors, which though they are modern and current are mostly of very ancient date, were and are in large part contrary to nature, and hence may be truly termed barbarous.][18]

Leopardi goes to on to argue that although Egyptians, Indians, Chinese and Persians had their golden ages, they came much earlier and 'la memoria loro non è passata fino a noi, ma rimasta nel buio dell'antichità' [their

18 Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, p. 268. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 437.

memory did not come down as far as us but remained in the dark night of antiquity]. The obvious consequence, Leopardi concludes, is that 'ci è pervenuta la memoria sola della loro corruzione e barbarie succeduta naturalmente alla civiltà, e abbattutasi ad esser contemporanea della grandezza e del fiore dei popoli Greco e Romano' [the only memory to reach us was that of their corruption and barbarism, which naturally succeeded civilisation and just happened to be contemporary with the greatness and the flowering of the Greek and Roman peoples].[19]

Leopardi's attack on the Orient is, of course, an attack on the northern European and Italian Romantics, though it remains nonetheless somewhat discriminatory of Orientals. Leopardi's counter-hegemonic stance, as he writes in the *Discorso di un italiano*, is derived from 'l'affetto che porto focosissimo alla mia patria e … al vero' [the most burning love that I bear towards my motherland and … the truth].[20] Leopardi points out the paradox in the attitude of the Romantics who 'non consentono che si pigli materiale di poesia dall'antichità nostra' [do not give their consent to material for poetry taken from our own antiquity] and yet 'la pigliano dall'Asia e dall'Africa' [they take it from Asia and Africa]. On the one hand, the Romantics 'non vogliono che si canti ai bisavoli' [they do not want poets to sing to their forefathers], but, on the other, they 'cantano agli antipodi' [they sing to the Antipodes]. Leopardi responds to the Romantic claim of the provinciality of Neoclassical literature by arguing that, in order to understand Romantic verses, the reader should be someone who has 'veduto tutto il mondo' [seen the whole world].[21] Indeed, in juxtaposing the tradition of Classicism and Romanticism, Leopardi is also addressing the worldly dimension of literature in the aftermath of the Oriental renaissance, a dimension that the Romantics had used to fight against the provinciality of Italian literature, but that Leopardi discards as irrelevant.

19 Leopardi, *Zibaldone,* in *Tutte le opere,* p. 268. *The Notebooks of Leopardi*, p. 437.

20 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p.915. English translation: Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 114.

21 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 929. Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 139.

Humanisation of phenomena: Against Di Breme's nature as life in all its guises

In the *Discorso di un italiano*, Leopardi's response to Di Breme is also shaped by the discussion of the notion of 'feeling' in relation to the idea of the 'humanisation' of natural phenomena in poetry. With particular reference to Di Breme's discussion of the love story between the rose and the nightingale in Byron's *The Giaour* as the epitome of the representation of nature as life in all its guises, Leopardi responds with a dissertation on the impossibility of not humanising natural phenomena if they are to be understood by humans. Leopardi writes:

> Quando il poeta ha finto che la rosa innamorata si tinga in presenza dell'amante di rossore verginale, e sospiri, che altro ha fatto se non trasformata la rosa in persona umana? ...o sorge nella fantasia de' lettori l'immagine di una donna, o la rosa resta una rosa qual'è, né amante né amata né viva né altro che un fior vero e semplice.
>
> [When the poet has feigned that the enamoured rose blushes in the presence of her lover with virginal modesty, and that she sighs, what else has he done other than transform the rose into a human being? ... either a womanly figure emerges in the imagination of readers, or the rose remains simply a rose, not in love nor beloved nor alive nor anything other than an actual mere flower.][22]

Orientalism, and the alleged strong relationship between the Orient and nature advocated by the Romantics, did not solve the problem of imitation for Leopardi. The poet developed a theory according to which the Romantic aim of delighting in imitating truth, especially by transplanting objects to places where they could not exist, nullifies the value of poetry as it no longer deals with truth, but with an imitation of it. Leopardi claims that from this

> apparisce quanto s'ingannino i romantici pensando d'accrescer pregio alla poesia con rendere la imitazione oltre ogni modo facile, e sottrarla da ogni legge, e sostituire meglio che possono il vero in luogo del simile al vero, sì che vengono a scemare e quasi ad annullare il maraviglioso, e per conseguenza il dilettoso dell'imitazione.

22 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 944; Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 166–7.

> [It is evident how wrong the Romantics are to think that they increase the value of poetry by making imitation easier, and by freeing it from every rule, and by replacing … truth with what is similar to truth, so that they happen to decrease and almost nullify the marvel, and consequently, the delight arising from imitation.][23]

Even more problematic for Leopardi is the association between Di Breme's idea of the pathetic and the 'horrific', as he claims this to be of little relevance to the human experience. This is where the poetic excess and the fashionability of Romanticism come across most powerfully for Leopardi. According to him, as Fabio Camilletti points out, the attempts of Di Breme and the Romantics to bring about a modernisation of Italian literature by following modern European trends was an attempt that, due to its seductive power, would eventually pose a threat to poetry as a whole. If 'fashion', 'renewal', 'revival' or 'newness' are symptomatic of the attitude associated with modernity – as Camilletti maintains when making reference to Giorgio Agamben – Leopardi's ambiguous attitude towards Romanticism can be seen as part of a dialectic between a classical antiquity as the golden age of mankind, the age of illusions, and the threatening but seductive 'transient romantic modernity'.[24] As has already been seen, Byron self-consciously addressed his Orientalism as a fashion and the Orient he created, and especially Islam, was, to some extent, based on a poetic excess that aimed to shock his readers. Camilletti seems therefore correct in seeing Leopardi's attack on Di Breme as an attempt to frame the problem of the modernisation of Italian letters 'within a theory of composition and readership, in which the polarization is … between a skillful moderation and balancing of poetic effect and the trivial search for excess, which can be seen as charming first but is, in the end, intrinsically anti-poetic'.[25] For Leopardi, the horrific nature of the events in *The Giaour* ran precisely this risk. Thus, he contrasts the idea of poetic excess with the ennobling and delicate nature of the classical

23 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 944; Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 167.

24 Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 48.

25 Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 47–53.

idea of feeling, and in order to establish that even classical authors were sentimental and engaged with nature by imitating it, he quotes the following passage from Homer's *Iliad* (VIII, 555–9), translated by himself, in which the Greek poet deals with the feeling of joy aroused in a shepherd by the sight of the moon and the starry sky:

> Sì come quando graziosi in cielo / Rifulgon gli astri intorno alla luna, / E l'aere è senza vento, e si discopre / Ogni cima de' monti ed ogni selva / Ed ogni torre; allor che su nell'alto / tutto quanto l'immenso etra si schiude, / E vedesi ogni stella, e ne gioisce / Il pastor dentro all'alma.
>
> [So as when charming in the sky / Stars shine brightly around the moon / And the air is without wind, and discloses itself / Each tip of the mountains and each wood / And each tower; when up in the high / All the immense ether is disclosing / And he can see each star, and rejoice / The shepherd within his soul.][26]

This passage is, of course, one of the inspirations and sources for the shepherd's interrogation of nature in 'Canto notturno', which is what makes the poem partially Neoclassical, as we will see. Leopardi's translation of the passage emphasises the delicacy and joyfulness of the shepherd's feelings, evoked in him by the moon and the starred sky, and in 'Canto notturno' these delicate feelings will turn into the pain of existence as a result of modern pessimism. Leopardi quotes Homer's passage to hint at classical antiquity as the age of illusions, and as Alexander Pope's English translation of this passage shows, this is the age also associated with sacredness:

> As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night, / O'er heaven's pure azure spreads her sacred light, / When not a breath disturbs the deep serene, / And not a cloud o'ercast the solemn scene, / Around her throne the vivid planets roll, / And stars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole, / O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure shed, / And tip with silver every mountain's head: / Then shines the vales, the rocks in prospect rise, / A flood of glory bursts from all the skies: / The conscious swains, rejoicing in the sight, / Wye the blue vault, and bless the useful light.[27]

26 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 934.

27 Homer, *Iliad*, VIII: 555–9, trans. Alexander Pope, in Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 148.

By relocating the same poetic image of the shepherd contemplating the moon and the stars in the Asian plateaux in 'Canto notturno', arguably in line with the popularasied image of Vedic shepherds in the *Vedic Hymns* (as seen with Giosuè Carducci's homage to Leopardi in Chapter 6), and by emptying the image of the sacredness present in his translation of Homer, I argue that Leopardi aimed to subvert the alleged sacredness of the Orient, which was often represented in Romantic Orientalism. For Leopardi, classical antiquity is the true sacred age of illusion, but not the Orient in modern times, since knowledge of modernity already exists (and will soon impact the Orient too) and can no longer provide the illusions of antiquity. However, it is also crucial to consider that Leopardi uses this passage to counter the Romantics' idea of the imitation of nature, which to a large extent had become associated with the Orient in the work of the Romantics. Leopardi refers to the feeling of joy aroused by the beauty and immediacy of the shepherd's vision, and to the question of the Greek imitation of nature, and wonders why the Romantics claimed that classical authors were not sentimental or at one with nature: 'Come dunque diranno i poeti antichi non sono sentimentali, quando la natura è sentimentale, e questi imitano e per poco non contraffano la natura?' [Who can then say that our ancient poets were not sentimental, when nature is sentimental, and these poets imitate nature without disguising it?].[28] Accordingly, Leopardi establishes a clear contrast between the classical and the Romantic idea of feeling by playing on the idea of authenticity and poetic balance versus fashionability and poetic excess:

> Ora non metterò a confronto la delicatezza la tenerezza la soavità del sentimentale antico e *nostro* [my italics], colla ferocia colla barbarie colla bestialità di quello dei romantici propri. Certamente la morte di una donna amata è un soggetto patetico in guisa ch'io stimo che se un poeta, colto da questa sciagura, e cantandola, non fa piangere, gli convenga disperare di poter mai commuovere i cuori. Ma perchè l'amore dev'essere incestuoso? Perchè la donna trucidata? Perchè l'amante una cima di scellerato, e per ogni parte mostruosissimo?

28 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 934.

> [I shall not compare the delicacy and tenderness and suavity of this ancient sentimentality of *ours* [my italics] with the barbarism and bestiality of the Romantics proper. Surely the death of a beloved lady is such a pathetic subject, I believe, that he who is struck by this misfortune, composes poems about it, and does not manage to make people cry, should give up all hope of moving any heart ever. But why love must be incestuous? Why the woman slaughtered?][29]

Classical feeling is not only more delicate, but also 'ours', thus implying identity, literary tradition and national struggle, and it is opposed to the barbarous and brutal feeling of the Romantics proper. Romantic feeling is thus closer to the monstrous than the human. Nature and the spirit are corrupted, while the sensuous and the irrational are brought together in the return to barbarous excess. To Di Breme's claim that the humanisation of natural phenomena in classical mythology corrupts nature, Leopardi responds by arguing that the human consideration of the idea of feeling can only occur by means of the humanisation of nature:

> E veruno al mondo non pianse nè piangerà delle disgrazie d'un fiore o d'un pomo o d'un lago o d'un monte, nè si rallegrò delle fortune di una stella, eccetto se prima non l'ebbe immaginando trasmutata in persona. … Inoltre l'esempio del Byron portato dal Cavaliere, non solamente non giova a lui, ma conferma … quello ch'io dico. … Forsechè nell'animo nostro non è, non dico facile, ma possibile concepire l'idea d'un sentimento d'un affetto d'un pensiero non umano?

29 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 939. Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 157. It is interesting to note that the idea of mistreating a female character and its association with the representation of feeling – which Leopardi strongly criticises – was a product of Romantic Orientalism and continued to be a feature in subsequent European cultural engagements with the Orient. As Joseph Lew maintains, 'beginning with *The Giaour*, Byron transformed the Oriental tale in the West and became a precursor to the creators of the Aidas, Butterflys …. Before *The Giaour* women were not portrayed as being generally mistreated'. Joseph Lew, 'The Necessary Orientalist? The Giaour and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny', in *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834*, eds Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 173–202 (176–7).

> [No one in the world ever cried or will ever cry for the misfortunes of a flower or an apple or a lake or a mountain, nor will they be pleased at the fortunes of a star, unless the poet had already personified it. ... not only does the example of Byron produced by the Cavaliere not support his theory, but it rather confirms ... what I am saying. ... Can anyone among us actually imagine a different kind of life than the human one?][30]

Leopardi spells out his rejection of Di Breme's argument about the Orient and nature, which lay at the heart of Romantic Orientalism. No age or imitation of nature surpassed that of Greece, and neither northern Europe nor the Orient could provide a more illuminating model, seems to conclude Leopardi. If this was Leopardi's general line of thought, though, why did he eventually come to embrace Orientalism?

Leopardi's protest: Mocking Romantic Orientalism

Leopardi's engagement with Orientalism must be located within his overall protest against certain aspects of Romanticism, especially its rejection of classical antiquity and its concern with metaphysics. I borrow the term 'protest' from Walter Binni, who states that Leopardi's battle was conducted on two primary fronts: against the 'volgare-romantico' [vulgar-Romantic] content of Romantic poetry; and against the 'volgare-classicistico' [vulgar-Classicist] formalism of formulaic Neoclassicism.[31] Like the Romantics, Leopardi believed that poetry should be concerned with themes related to contemporary life, and, crucially, with modernity, revolutionary ideas, the senses and imagination, and the notion of the infinite. However, for Leopardi, such ideas needed to be approached not by means of the depiction of *spiritual* nature, but through the experience of *bodily* nature, that is, from a materialist stance which strips nature of

30 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 943. Camilletti, *Clasicism and Romanticism*, p. 164.

31 Walter Binni, *La protesta di Leopardi* (Florence: Sansoni, 1967), p. 92.

the sacred and of anthropomorphism and sees it as an end in itself. If we take Paul De Man's idea of the poetic object of Romantic poetry, that is, 'nature',[32] but we also remind ourselves of how Romantic notions of nature are inextricably linked to Orientalism and Jones' work as the first theorisation of the imitation of nature in opposition to Neoclassical emulation, we discover that Leopardi embraced many of the elements of Romantic Orientalism. However, we also realise that Leopardi emptied these notions of nature of the metaphysical and the spiritual – of God and gods and of speculations of origins, creation and human perfectibility; of nature possessing a soul and as life in all its guises; and of harmony between nature and humans – in order to create an *atheist* and *anti-humanist* poetry. As Joanna Neilly tells us, German Romanticism, through Friedrich Wilhem Joseph Schelling and Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert, eventually theorised a *Naturalphilosophie* [philosophy of Nature] that became the foundation of the *Sturm Und Drang*, and according to which the way forward 'is a new mythology inspired by the concept of original harmony'.[33] Indeed, for E. T. A. Hoffmann, for instance, the Orient became 'the locus of this mythological harmony', especially in light of Friedrich Schlegel's statement, in his *Speech on Mythology* (1799), that 'it is in the Orient that we must look for the highest Romanticism'.[34] These were, of course, the same claims Berchet and Di Breme went on to make in their engagement with Romantic Orientalism. In order to counter these conceptualisations of nature in relation to harmony, the Orient and poetry, Leopardi eventually devised his existentialist Orientalist poetry, which depicts the crisis of modern human beings' discovery both of their impotence and insignificance as part of a materialist nature, and

32 Paul de Man writes, 'An abundant imagery coinciding with an equally abundant quantity of natural objects, the theme of imagination linked closely to the theme of nature, such is the fundamental ambiguity that characterises the poetics of Romanticism'. Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 2.

33 Joanna Neilly, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Orient: Romantic Aesthetics and the German Imagination* (Oxford: Legenda, 2016), p. 12.

34 Neilly, *E. T. A. Hoffmann's Orient*, pp. 12, 21.

of nature's misleading and deceiving attitude. In short, Leopardi created a negative Romantic Orientalism that aimed to mock Romantic Orientalism's promise of a spiritual and primitive Orient that could heal the wounds of European modernity.

Leopardi's journey through Classicism: From historical to cosmic pessimism

Although Leopardi became more and more receptive to certain elements of Romanticism from the 1820s onwards, the following passage from *Discorso di un italiano* encapsulates an unchanging aspect of Leopardi's sceptical conception of Romanticism in relation to spirituality and metaphisycs:

> Già è cosa manifesta e notissima che i romantici si sforzano di sviare il più che possono la poesia dal commercio coi sensi, per li quali è nata e vivrà finattantochè sarà poesia, e di farla praticare coll'intelletto e strascinarla dal visibile all'invisibile e dalle cose alle idee, e trasmuta di materiale e fantastica e corporale che era, in metafisica e ragionevole e spirituale.
>
> [It is already clear and well-known that, as much as possible, the Romantics are striving to divert poetry from its commerce with the senses, though it is that very commerce that gave birth to poetry in the first place and that alone guarantees its survival as actual poetry; instead, they wish to make poetry consort with the intellect, and to transplant it from the visible to the invisible and from things to ideas, and to transform it from the material, imaginative, corporeal substance that it was into something metaphysical, reasonable and spiritual.][35]

Leopardi's ambiguous engagement with Romanticism should, however, be considered in context and its development illustrated. Between 1818 and the early 1820s, Classicism was, for Leopardi the identitarian choice associated with the patriotic protest of the Risorgimento and the counter-hegemonic struggle for Italian independence. *Discorso di un italiano*, as well as the canzone 'All'Italia' (1818), emerged in this

35 Leopardi, *Discorso di un italiano*, p. 915. Camilletti, *Classicism and Romanticism*, p. 115.

context. In 'All'Italia', Leopardi sings of modern Italian decadence and former glory by celebrating Greece's victory over Persia, and the former's eternal glory, which, it could be argued, seems to challenge the Greek misery depicted by Byron in *The Giaour*: 'Ve' come infuse e tinti / del barbarico sangue i greci eroi, / cagione ai Persi d'infinito affanno, / a poco a poco vinti dalle piaghe, / l'un sopra l'altro cade. Oh viva, oh viva: / beatissimi voi / mentre nel mondo si favelli o scriva' [See how, drenched / in barbarian blood, the hero Greeks, / cause endless torment to the Persians, / one by one, defeated by their wounds, / fall on one another. / Oh live, oh live, forever. You are blessed / as long as men will live to tell your story].[36]

Leopardi tried to bring about a renewal of Classicism by moving beyond the question of imitation and proposing a new corporeal Neoclassicism that, in essence, would comply with many of the tenets of Romanticism's conceptions of modern poetry, that is, a concern with passion, reason and the predicament of modernity, but that at the same time refused to focus solely on the notion of the pathetic (passion), or to be metaphysical, mystical or spiritual.[37] His Neoclassicism retained a component of Enlightenment philosophical sensualism, but engaged with contemporary issues, while remaining inspired by a pessimistic assessment of history and the Italian condition of political subordination and moral despair – a historical assessment that shaped his *historical pessimism*. Leopardi's pessimism would change over time and would come to embrace not only the contemporary moral situation of Italians, but human morality and the human condition at large, particularly in their relation to nineteenth-century Romantic conceptions of nature. In this early phase of poetic activity, Leopardi believed the power of poetry made it suitable for the expression of 'national passion' and he believed that it could be a force of national regeneration and heroism. Classicism and humanism, especially in 'All'Italia' and 'Sopra il

36 Giacomo Leopardi, 'All'Italia' ['To Italy'], in *Canti*, trans. Jonathan Galassi (London: Penguin, 2010), pp. 10–11.

37 Binni, *La protesta di Leopardi*, pp. 30–5.

monumento di Dante' (1818), are evoked for their heroism and not as a Classicist formulaic exercise of imitation.[38]

However, from 1821 onwards, but especially with the composition of some of the *Operette morali* in 1824, Leopardi began his new poetic phase in which his pessimism gradually became more existentialist and focused on a conception of unhappiness which was concerned not just with Italian misery, but with the human condition at large, nature, knowledge and modernity. The modern nostalgia for the world of illusions of mythology and antiquity – the ideal world of poetry – and the subsequent interpretation of nature as emptied of the sacred and therefore seemingly cruel towards humans were the main sources of his pessimism. The Neoclassical poem 'Bruto minore', composed in December 1821, as Binni points out, was the first work of Leopardi's new pessimistic phase (which would continue up until the 'Canto notturno' and 'La ginestra'), in which the poet begins to engage with a nihilism that emerged when 'corrupting reason' *(ragione corruttrice)* became able to reveal the enchanting tricks of nature. It is in light of this truth that a classical figure like Brutus commits suicide and carries out his protest, which we can consider to be Leopardi's protest.

In 'Ultimo canto di Saffo' (1822), Leopardi reaches the conclusion that the relationship between humans and nature will never constitute the basis for human happiness.[39] In this work, the poet cries about human impotence in relation to nature: 'A' tuoi superbi regni / vile, o natura, grave ospite addetta, / e dispregiata amante' [In your proud kingdoms I am worthless, Nature, / an uninvited guest, and unloved lover]. The impotence felt by humans is captured by Leopardi's first interrogation of nature, thus paving the way for the other cosmic interrogation of nature in 'Canto notturno': 'Qual fallo mai, qual sì nefando eccesso / macchiommi anzi il natale, / onde sì torvo / il ciel mi fosse di fortuna il volto? [What failing was it, what heinous excess / marked me before my birth, so heaven / and the face of fortune were so stern with me?].[40]

38 Binni, *La protesta di Leopardi*, pp. 38–9.
39 Binni, *La protesta di Leopardi*, pp. 66–77.
40 Giacomo Leopardi, 'Ultimo canto di Saffo' [Sappho's Last Song] in *Canti*, p. 87.

At this stage, Leopardi begins to develop his theory of pleasure, as well as ideas of 'boredom' (*noia*) and the 'tedious' (*tedio*):for Leopardi, it is only the thought of pleasure that provides temporary pleasure, and the modern realisation that a condition of infinite pleasure is impossible plunges humans into boredom. These ideas become central to his development of a discourse of modern unhappiness inextricably linked to 'reason' (*ragione*), 'knowledge' (*sapienza*) and the idea of 'truth' (*vero*) as the conditions of modernity.[41] In turn, death is seen as the end of the suffering caused by a life in antagonism with nature, where pleasure can only be found in the imagination and poetry, and their dimension of hope, where, if only momentarily, the longing for pleasure and the reality of pain become neutralised (which also occurs during sleep).[42] This is, in essence, the so-called *cosmic pessimism* that characterised at least the last thirteen years of the poet's brief life, and the mode in which he continued his protest in his more existentialist phase. In contrast to the claims of the Orientalist-inspired Romantic sensibility, which regarded human beings as in harmony with (and always as part of) nature as a benign force, Leopardi developed a philosophical-poetic apparatus which assessed the significance of nature to humans as a malign force if seen through the 'knowledge' of modernity.

Irony, satire and Hebraic Orientalism

The *Operette morali* (1835, though many were written in 1824, and two incomplete editions were published in 1827 and 1834) mark Leopardi's greater openness to new images and styles associated with the more global dimensions of Romanticism – in particular the cosmopolitan traditions of tales and fables revisited through the practices of Orientalism, medievalism and the renewed interest in folk literature. Although Leopardi continued to develop his cosmic pessimism and existentialism in this work, the materials he used acquired new dimensions, which mark a turning point

41 Prete, *Il pensiero poetante*, pp. 16–35.
42 Prete, *Il pensiero poetante*, pp. 19–21.

in his production. The imagery developed in this work – which opens with a history of the human race that owes debts to the Bible and Plato – has cosmic connotations, with references to a number of historical figures in politics, the arts and sciences, and periods ranging from antiquity to modernity, combining natural and human elements with planetary and universal geographies. No longer a patriotic polemic about the Italian 'classical' tradition, but a philosophical and aesthetic protest, however, in the *Operette* irony and satire are the tools used to mock all those aspects of Romanticism and Orientalism with which Leopardi felt uncomfortable. It is in this light, I would suggest, that many of the choices he made regarding certain figures, places and themes that populate the twenty-four pieces of the *Operette* should be read: the dialogue between the Dutch anatomist Friedrich Ruysh and his mummies, or that between Nature and an Icelander, or between Columbus and Pietro Gutierrez concerning their journey towards America, or the Oriental tale of the Hebrew Cock, to mention a few, are ironic and provocative evocations of the Romantic Northern, Oriental and American imageries and contexts mentioned at the start of thic chapter. Despite the cosmopolitan 'shells' of the *Operette*, however, the content of Leopardi's work remains rooted in Greek and Hebrew antiquity in terms of sources and models.

My focus in this section is on how one of the *Operette*, 'Cantico del gallo silvestre', represents Leopardi's first real attempt to develop an existentialist Oriental tale – and his first step towards the negative Orientalism of 'Canto notturno' – as a way of mocking the Romantic Oriental tale. By referring to the 'Orient' and 'Orientals' in the 'Cantico', Leopardi seems to engage with the jargon of the Oriental renaissance on the surface, but through the references and content ironically developed a sort of Hebraic Orientalism. As Paolo Rota has noted, Leopardi often used the term 'Oriental' in relation to Hebrew and the Jews, and he repeatedly talked of the Jews' 'Oriental character' and compared them to the Arabs and other Orientals, in particular in his discussion of the abundance of metaphors in the Bible.[43] Rota suggests that the

43 Paolo Rota discusses Leopardi's engagement with the Bible at length and confirms that Leopardi's sacred sources were indeed confined primarily to Homer's mythology

biblical world, like the world of ancient Greece, constituted the context for Leopardi's search for an original state of nature to set against civil society. For Leopardi, these antiquities, Rota goes on to say, referred to a golden age, free from rational revelations, at the dawn of humanity, a time of unrepeatable happiness.[44]

In the *Operette*, however, Classicism takes on a new significance, related to the representation of the sacred, here associated with Leopardi's engagement with the ancient Greek writer Lucian and his satirical representation of Greek gods. As Angiola Ferrari maintains, Leopardi's interest in satire is still related to his celebration of classical antiquity: language is a central concern in the context of the absence in modern times of the 'language of nature' associated with the world of illusions and errors of classical mythology.[45] This idea had been explored by Lucian with regard to the loss of the sacred in ancient Greece. The satirist turned the Greek pantheon into comedy:

> Privi dell'aura mitica che li circonda nell'azione epica e tragica, gli dei della grecia non possono più parlare il linguaggio attribuito loro da Omero e dai poeti tragici, se non mutandone radicalmente il registro stilistico, dalla pronuncia sublime a quella comica.
>
> [Deprived of the mythical aura that surrounds tragic and epic action, Greek gods can no longer speak the language that had been given to them by Homer and the tragic poets, unless by radically changing the stylistic register, from the sublime to the comical.][46]

Classical Greece, in light of Lucian's critique, is now no longer a symbol of mythology, but of modernity. Most of the *Operette* lament the loss of the sacred, and the absence of illusions is reinforced by modern truths about nature, mortal life and the longing for death. With particular reference

---

and the Bible. Rota, however, also stresses how Leopardi's interest in both Homer and the Bible had a linguistic, as well as a nationalistic, dimension in reference to the Hebrew and Greek 'nations'. Leopardi looked at these antiquities as worlds of illusions dominated by heroism and love of country. Paolo Rota, *Leopardi e la Bibbia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998), p. 28.

44 Rota, *Leopardi e la Bibbia*, p. 33.

45 Angiola Ferrari, *La vita imperfetta: Le* Operette morali *di Giacomo Leopardi* (Genova: Marietti, 1991), pp. 18–19.

46 Ferrari, *La vita imperfetta*, p. 27.

to Leopardi's mocking of Romantic Orientalism through satire, I would suggest that, like Lucian, Leopardi changes the register of Romantic Orientalism and its emphasis on the sacred and the harmonious in nature – which, for Leopardi, is in dissonance with the true character of modernity – and depicts this world of illusion through satiric and ironic existentialism.

I would now like to turn to some passages from the 'Cantico' to illustrate the stylistic similarity to Romantic Orientalism, as well as the satirical dimensions of the existentialist content. First of all, Leopardi seems to borrow from Berchet's essays on both Bürger and *Sakuntala*, and uses the Romantic theorist's translational formula of summarising a translation of a poetic work in prose. Leopardi introduces the piece by referring to two elements: the universal image of the wild cock; and the Jewish source of the tale he had translated:

> Affermano alcuni maestri e scrittori ebrei, che tra il cielo e la terra, o vogliamo dire mezzo nell'uno e mezzo nella altra, vive un certo gallo salvatico; il quale sta in sulla terra coi piedi, e tocca colla cresta e col becco il cielo. Questo gallo gigante, oltre a varie particolarità che di lui si possono leggere negli autori predetti, ha uso di ragione; o certo, come un pappagallo, è stato ammaestrato, non so da chi, a profferir parole a guisa degli uomini: perocché si è trovato in una cartapecora antica, scritto in lettera ebraica, e in lingua tra caldea, targumica; rabbinica, cabalistica e talmudica, un cantico intitolato, *Scir detarnegòl bara letzafra*, cioè *Cantico mattutino del gallo silvestre*: il quale, non senza fatica grande, né senza interrogare piú d'un rabbino, cabalista, teologo, giurisconsulto e filosofo ebreo, sono venuto a capo d'intendere, e di ridurre in volgare come qui appresso si vede.
>
> [Certain Jewish masters and writers declare, that between heaven and earth, or rather, half in one and half in the other, there dwells a wild cock; which stands with its feet upon the earth, and with its crest and beak brushes the sky. This giant fowl ... has the power of reason; or at least, like a parrot, he has been trained, I know not by whom, to utter words as men do: for in an old parchment, written in Hebrew characters, and in a language compounded of the Chaldean, Targumic, Rabbinical, Cabalistic and Talmudic, a canticle has been found, entitled *Scir detarnegòl bara letzafra*, which is to say the *Morning Canticle of the Wild Cock*: which not without great labour, nor without consulting more than one rabbi, cabalist, theologian, jurist and Jewish philosopher, I have managed to understand, and to render in the vulgar tongue as follows below.][47]

47 Giacomo Leopardi, 'Cantico del gallo silvestre', in *Tutte le opere*, vol i, pp. 156–8 (156). English translation: *Canticle of the Wild Cock*, in *Moral Tales*, trans. P. Creagh (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983), p. 170.

Leopardi is playing with the idea of the newly found manuscript, its language and translation, which the Oriental renaissance had greatly revived. Leopardi explains his theory of translation and his poetic preference of prose over verse, as theorised by Berchet, as well as his concerns with truth: 'quanto si è al volgarizzamento infrascritto; per farlo più fedele che si potesse (del che mi sono anche sforzato in ogni modo), mi è paruto di usare la prosa piuttosto che il verso, se bene in cosa poetica' [as concerns the rendering below: to make it as faithful as I could (to which end I have striven in every other way), it seemed best to use prose rather than verse, althought the matter is poetical].[48] Most importantly, Leopardi ironically issues a 'disclaimer' which seems to parody the profession of Orientalist philology in relation to the style of the translation as he explains that: 'Lo stile interrotto, e forse qualche volta gonfio, non mi dovrà essere imputato, essendo conforme a quello del testo originale: il qual testo corrisponde in questa parte all'uso delle lingue, e massime dei poeti, d'oriente' [The broken and perhaps occasionally bombastic style should not be blamed on me; being in conformity with the original text; which in turn corresponds in this respect with the usages of the languages, and especially the poetry, of the east].[49]

Using satire reminiscent of Lucian, Leopardi is playing with the image of a supernatural giant cock that, however, in an atheist and materialist manner, possessed reason, and pointed to the idea of knowledge, consciousness and pessimism. The cock's singing and morning wake-up call is a peculiar one, concerned as it is with real awakening, truth and even warning: 'su mortali, destatevi. Il di rinasce: torna la verità sulla terra, e partono le immagini vane. Sorgete; ripigliatevi la somma della vita; riducetevi dal mondo falso al vero' [Up, mortals, awake! Day is reborn: truth comes anew to the earth, and the empty shadows depart. Arise; once more take up the burden of life; return from the world of falsehood into truth].[50] Sleep, like death, is false: it is the realm of illusion and imagination, but it is not representative of the reality of life, which is crude and full of pain. The

48 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 171.
49 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 171.
50 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 171.

words of the cock are the words of Leopardi's existentialist battle: using the shell of Romantic Orientalism, his aim was to switch from forgery to truth, from poetic excess to poetic balance, from dream to awakening, from fashionability to eternity and, most importantly, from a spiritual language to a corporeal one. Here we see the same idea of a nostalgia for a sacred absence, and the tale will come to focus on how life is an inevitable and gradual advance of all cosmic life towards death. The tale's narration concerns a canticle the cock sang, the narrator is not sure whether it was every morning or only once, involving an interrogation of nature in relation to human happiness from the moment of *corporeal* awakening to the moment of sleep, comparing the awakened state to pain, a pain that dissolves in sleep: 'il primo tempo del giorno suol essere ai viventi il più comportabile ... Molti infortuni e travagli propri, molte cause di timore e di affanno, paiono in quel tempo minori assai, che non parvero la sera innanzi' [the first period of the day is as a rule the most bearable to living beings. ... Many personal misfortunes and troubles, many causes of fear and anxiety, appear at that time far smaller than on the previous evening]. For Leopardi, 'la sera è comparabile alla vecchiaia; per lo contrario, il principio del mattino somiglia alla giovinezza: questo per lo più racconsolato e confidente; la sera trista, scoraggiata e inchinevole a sperar male [evening can be compared to old age; on the contrary early morning resembles youth: the latter for the most part serene and confident; the evening sad, discouraged, and inclined to fear the worst].[51]

Thus, the daily routine becomes a metaphor for human life: waking up is birth and falling asleep is death. If waking up makes one feel more desirous to rediscover, if only in the mind, some joyous expectations and sweet thoughts, the reality is that only 'pochi sono soddisfatti di questo desiderio: a tutti il risvegliarsi è danno' [few are satisfied in this desire: to all men, waking is an affliction]. On the other hand, sleep is the sweetest thing, in which all living beings would be 'languendo per la terra in profondissima quiete' [languishing throughout the earth in the profoundest quiet]. In this state, there would be no act at all: 'non muggito di buoi per li prati, né strepito di fiere per le foreste, né canto di uccelli per aria, né sussurro

51 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 157. *Canticle*, p. 172–3.

d'api o di farfalle scorresse per la campagna' [not a lowing of oxen in the meadows, not a roar of wild beasts in the forests, nor the song of birds in the air, nor the buzzing of bees, or butterflies over the country]. Far from being a representation of life in all its guises, nature is used by Leopardi to question whether an absence of life in nature could result in more or less misery: 'non voce, non moto alcuno, se non delle acque, del vento e delle tempeste, sorgesse in alcuna banda; certo l'universo sarebbe inutile; ma forse vi si troverebbe o copia minore di felicità, o più miseria, che oggi non vi si trova?' [if no voice, no motion whatsoever, but that of the waters, the winds and the storms, arose in any place; of course the universe would be useless; but would there by chance be either less abundance of happiness, or else more misery, than we find in it today?].[52]

If Leopardi meant to express how the existence of things has death for its sole and proper object, his emphasis was on the pain of existence and the meaninglessness of this painful life.[53] For instance, the narrator tells us that the cock enquires of the sun whether it has ever seen blissful living beings.[54] The interrogation of nature concerns not only human happiness, but also the happiness of nature itself, as the cock asks the sun if it has ever seen happiness within the confines of the world. The cock goes on to wonder whether, if happiness exists at all, how it is connected with nature: 'in qual campo soggiorna, in qual bosco, in qual montagna, in qual valle, in qual paese abitato o deserto, in qual pianeta dei tanti che le tue fiamme illustrano e scaldano?' [in what field does it dwell, in what forest, what mountain, what valley, in what region inhabited or unpeopled, on which planet of the many that your flames warm and illumine?]. The cock's interrogation of nature, as will be seen, is the prelude to the shepherd's interrogation of the moon in 'Canto notturno', and both interrogations are ironically but strategically set in the Orient.

The tale thus appears more as an ironic subversion of the ideas and practices of Romantic Orientalism, especially where the term 'Orient' is used in relation to Oriental languages and poets, as this was, by the 1820s, associated

52 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 171.
53 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 172.
54 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 156. *Canticle*, p. 171.

with modern Orientalism. The natural image of the wild cock becomes associated with the void of modernity and the lack of sacredness and harmony in nature, to the extent that the cock is a reminder of how nature is *death*, rather than life in all its guises – the subversion of Di Breme's Romantic concept. Nature, the cycles of life and universal existence all come under scrutiny in this Romantic shell of harmonious life only for Leopardi to ironically decree our doomed fate of existential meaningless in a materialist universe:

> Tempo verrà, che esso universo, e la natura medesima sarà spenta. E nel modo che di grandissimi regni ed imperi umani, e loro meravigliosi moti, che furono famosissimi in altre età, non resta oggi segno né fama alcuna ... Così questo arcano mirabile e spaventoso dell'esistenza universale, innanzi di essere dichiarato né inteso, si dileguerà e perderassi.
>
> [The time will come, when this universe, and nature herself, will be snuffed out. And as of many great kingdoms and empires of man, and their marvellous doings, that were most famous in other ages, there survives today no relic or report whatever. ... And so this wondrous and terrifying mystery of universal existence, ere ever it be declared or understood, will perish and pass away.][55]

Leopardi's longing for death as an end to the meaningless pain of existence, in which nature remains unintelligible in its purposes, will find the highest expression in the nihilistic Orientalism of 'Canto notturno'.

Orientalist scholarship and the existentialist crisis of modern man: The background to 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia'

As the *Zibaldone* reveals, Leopardi's second Oriental tale, 'Canto notturno', was inspired by the review of a work by Baron M. De Meyendorff – a colonel of Imperial Russia – entitled *Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara* (1820), which Leopardi read in the September 1826 issue of the *Journal Des Savans*.[56] In *Voyage*, among other things, the Russian colonel provided

55 Leopardi, 'Cantico', p. 158.

56 Leopardi transcribed and commented on a passage from the review in the *Zibaldone*: 'Les Kirkis (nazione nomade, al Nord dell'Asia centrale) ont aussi

an ethnography of the Kirkis, a people he encountered on his travels from Orenburg, Russia, to Bukhara, in contemporary Uzbekistan, a region in the mountains of northern Central Asia. The Russian text, published in French by the Parisian publisher dedicated to Orientalism, the *Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Duprè* (published in conjunction with the French and British Asiatic societies, the two most important learned associations of European Orientalism), is indeed classifiable as Orientalist scholarship.[57] It was the kind of travel writing that developed in conjunction with modern European imperialism and that had geographical, political and economic, as well as ethnographical purposes, and it also included an assessment of the languages, customs, rituals and religions of the indigenous people, usually in order to facilitate European knowledge, commerce and rule. While it is unlikely that Leopardi read Meyendorff's book, the review he read provided a good insight into the concerns and ambitions of the Orientalist text. Written by J. P. Abel-Rémusat, a celebrated Orientalist – or, better, sinologist – of the Collége de France in Paris – one of the most important centres of modern Orientalism – the review stated right from the start that, in the context of the improved commercial relations between Imperial Russia and the small Muslim

---

des chants historiques qui rappellent les hauts faits de leurs heros; mais ces sortes de poèmes ne sont chantés que par des chanteurs de profession, et M. de Meyendorff (barone viaggiatore russo, autore d'un Voyage d'Orenbourg à Boukhara, fait en 1820; Paris, 1826; dal quale sono estratte queste notizie) eut le regret de ne pouvoir entendu un seul. Ib., septemb., p. 518. Plusieurs d'entre eux (d'entre le Kirkis), dice M. de Meyendorff, ib., passent souvent la moitié de la nuit assis sur une pierre à regarder la lune, et à improviser des paroles assez tristes sur des airs qui ne le sont pas moins. (3 Ottobre 1828)' [The Kirkis (a nomadic nation, in the north of central Asia) also have historical songs which recall the great deeds of their heroes; but these sorts of poems are sung only by professional singers, and Mr Meyendorff ... regretted not having heard a single one. Ib., septemb., p. 518. Many of them (the Kirkis), Mr Meyendorff says, ib., often spend half the night sitting on a stone watching the moon, and coming up with rather sad lyrics for airs that are no less sad. (3 October 1828)], in *Zibaldone*, in *Tutte le opere*, pp. 1189–90.

57 See Baron Georges De Meyendorff, *Voyage D'Orenbourg à Boukhara* (Paris: Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Duprè, 1826).

states on the right bank of the Oxus (modern-day Amu Darya river), the Russians wished to further strengthen these commercial relations, and gave rise to a few expeditions, the results of which are of equal interest to science and politics.[58] Science and politics are the primary concerns of the book. Abel-Rémusat spells out the Russian aim to have an embassy in Bukhara, and refers to the expedition that took place between 1816 and 1820. He describes the context of the embassy project, especially the kind of personnel and scientific apparatus that make up the project, including a naturalist, three translators/interpreters from Orenburg, and officers capable of gathering geographical and statistical information.[59] It is precisely this combination of scientific writing collecting knowledge of a primitive people in the mode of a natural history for the purposes of modern imperialism that, I would argue, captured Leopardi's attention.

In order to fully appreciate the significance of the Orientalist text (Meyendorff's as described by Abel-Rémusat) in the shaping of the Oriental shepherd of 'Canto notturno' and his existentialist interrogations of nature, it is important to reflect on how Leopardi envisioned science and knowledge within the dialectic between primitivism and modernity. Antonio Prete, in explaining the role of natural history in Leopardi's thought, develops the idea of 'negative anthropology' to describe how Leopardi 'trasforma il sapere illuminista in sapere della crisi' [transforms Enlightenment knowledge into the knowledge of crisis]. The *Zibaldone*, Prete goes on to say, gives a detailed account of how Leopardi traced the crisis of natural history, which the critic sums up thus:

> L'assunzione di una storia naturale nelle sue figure pre-disciplinari (lo stato di natura, la società naturale, il rapporto uomo-animale, le differenze nella scala biologica, il corpo animale, la relazione selvaggio-civile) ... è soltanto l'universo di forme e di segni, di tracce e di metafore dove l'altro si costituisce come misura critica, come soglia di decostruzione del valore civile, come sguardo che, sulla scena dell'adempimento nichilista, s'interroga sulla possibilità di 'svolta'.

58 J. P. Abel-Rémusat, Article: Baron Georges De Meyendorff, *Voyage D'Orenbourg à Boukhara* (Paris: Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Duprè, 1826), in *Journal Des Savans*, September 1826, pp. 515–27 (515–16).

59 Abel-Rémusat, p. 516.

> [The inception of a natural history in its pre-disciplinary shapes (the state of nature, the natural society, the relationship between man and animal, the differences in the biological ladder, the animal-body, and the relationship between the savage and the civilised) … is only a universe of forms and signs and traces and metaphors where the Other is constituted as a critical measure, as the threshold of deconstruction of civil value, as a gaze that, on the nihilist stage, interrogates itself regarding the possibility of its being a turning point.][60]

Although Prete does not discuss 'Canto notturno' in this context, I would suggest that Leopardi's negative anthropology is the lens with which to assess the relevance of the Orientalist text reviewed by Abel-Rémusat to the composition of 'Canto notturno'. The natural history of the Orientalist text points to a universe of ideas that is central to Leopardi's thought (the state of nature, natural society, civil society, the relationship between man and animal, the animal-body, and the relationship between the savage and the civilised). It also indicates how reason and knowledge serve the political body of power, for dominion over nature, and in the name of civilisation and spirituality. The nomadic Kirkis of Bukhara – the Oriental shepherds who are the subject of Meyendorff's ethnography – become the Other, the critical measure created with the metaphors and signs and forms and traces borrowed from natural history, the Orientalist text, through whom to deconstruct the value of civil society: the nihilist gaze of the poet interrogates nature regarding the meaning of the enterprise of life, the suffering that characterises it in its meaningless path towards death, the civilisations it creates and destroys, and the interaction between all mortal and non-mortal natural elements. The significance of the Orientalist text becomes even clearer in light of Prete's consideration that Leopardi's natural history pointed to how the modern genealogies of knowledge (anthropology, history, biology, politics) were examined through a critique of modernity: no longer observation, classification and comparison, but a dissolution that

> disegna un ordine naturale dove il corpo dell'uomo espone i segni di quella 'spiritualizzazione' e 'ragionevole' avventura sociale che ha fatto della distanza dalla

60 Prete, *Il pensiero poetante*, p. 162.

> natura una deprivazione di passione e di immaginazione … che ha seminato crudeltà delibando discorsi di liberazione, ed ha rinserrato il corpo sociale ('società stretta') nelle torri del potere predicando il dominio sulla animalità e il perfezionamento dello spirito.
>
> [designs a natural order where the human body exposes the signs of that 'spiritualisation' and 'reasonable' social adventure which has made of the distance from nature a deprivation of passion and imagination … that has sown cruelty through discourses of liberation, and has locked up the social body (*società stretta*) in the towers of power, preaching the dominion over animality and the perfectibility of the spirit.][61]

The Orientalist text thus provides the material which Leopardi metaphorically and imaginatively transforms into the crisis of man, that is, the disquieting interrogations of the shepherd.

Leopardi's operation in 'Canto notturno' involved both the modern crisis of the absence of illusions, and mocking of the Romantic quest for harmony in nature in the primitive Orient. The modern man that seeks refuge in the Orient, Leopardi seems to tell us, is doubly deceived as he should know that, in time, even the contemporary primitive Orient will give way to the truth of modern knowledge and will reveal nature's deceitfulness. The modern condition, and the knowledge and consciousness that stem from it, suggest to Leopardi that truth is now concerned with an awareness of the relationship between knowledge (of the alienating effects of nature) and unhappiness. Leopardi achieves this by creating an Oriental primitive shepherd – based on a re-elaboration of the nomadic Kirkis of Meyendorff's text and Rémusat's review – who no longer seems able to find harmony in nature, and the consequent absence of illusions is conducive to human alienation, and therefore pain. At the heart of Leopardi's theoretical battle, as Prete explains, there lies the human alienation from nature, and the distance between man and animal, which is modern consciousness. This distance is again indicative of an anti-humanism on Leopardi's part: 'L'antiumanesimo di Leopardi fissa lo sguardo sull'animalità negata, su questa immensa rimozione umana

61 Prete, *Il pensieto poetante*, pp. 162–3.

che è il mondo animale: in essa legge i segni d'una libertà vigorosa, d'una società non stretta dalle forme del potere, d'una differenza che racconta le forme d'un'esistenza priva dell'assillo dell'infelicità' [Leopardi's anti-humanism fixes the gaze on denied animality, on this immense human obliteration that is the animal world: in it, [Leopardi's anti-humanism] looks for the signs of a vigorous liberty, of a society not restricted by the forms of power, of a different dimension able to portray the forms of an existence free of the worry of unhappiness].[62] Animal happiness corresponds to the harmony of the senses, a harmony which in modern humans materialises only as desire and absence, and not, as the Romantics claimed, as a presence in the primitive Orient. It is with this desire and absence in mind that Leopardi staged the dialogue between the Asian shepherd on the one hand, and the moon and animals on the other, in 'Canto notturno', thus mocking Romantic Orientalism.

Moreover, if the poem exists in the shell of Romantic Orientalism in order to appropriate and implicitly subvert its host, the modernity of 'Canto notturno' is established by means of the contrast between Homer's Greek shepherd – as evident in the passage from the *Iliad* quoted in *Discorso di un italiano*, which inspired the composition of 'Canto notturno' – and Leopardi's Oriental shepherd. On the one hand, Homer's shepherd inhabits the primitivism allegedly characterised by the sacred and illusions. The shepherd is capable of delighting in the moon, and his observation of nature is characterised by harmony and enchantment. He enjoys the beautiful and the balance between reason and nature: 'Sì come quando graziosi in cielo / Rifulgon gli astri intorno alla luna' [So as when charming in the sky / Stars shine brightly around the moon]. More importantly, it is the clarity of vision metaphorically associated with the spirit of nature that affords the shepherd happiness: 'allor che su nell'alto / tutto quanto l'immenso etra si schiude, / E vedesi ogni stella, e ne gioisce / Il pastor dentro all'alma' [when up in the heavens / all the immense ether is disclosing / and he can see each star, and rejoice / the shepherd within his soul]. On the other hand, Leopardi's shepherd is

62 Salvatore Natoli and Antonio Prete, *Dialogo su Leopardi: Natura, poesia, filosofia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998) p. 73.

depicted as pondering the possibility of achieving a joyful feeling: the moon is a source of confrontation and enquiry rather than a source of joy, which points to a modern consciousness and the *absence* of and *nostalgia* for the primitive world of illusions that marks Homer's shepherd. There is no clarity or beauty in the vision of Leopardi's shepherd, and his nostalgia is typical of a modern age removed from the state of nature, where reason, as well as consciousness, are only tantamount to the loss of innocence and therefore pessimism.

Furthermore, as Leopardi wrote in the *Zibaldone*, his interest was especially piqued by the review's account of Meyendorff's description of a nomadic people, the Kirkis. He was fascinated by the review's description of the general life of the Kirkis in its extremes, but especially the existentialist dimension of their nomadic condition. The review referred to an ancient tradition according to which if the Kirkis stopped being nomads and settled down in houses, they would lose their freedom, as had happened to one of the neighboring tribes, the Baschirs:

> Une ancienne tradition porte que les Kirkis perdront leur liberté dès qui'il vivront dans des maisons et qui'ils s'adonneront à l'agriculture. L'exemple des Baschkirs leur montre la vraisemblance d'une telle prediction, et la crainte de la voir réalisée doit éloigner des occupations agricoles toutes ces tribus voisines des frontiers de l'empire russe, qui n'appréhendent rien tant que d'être attachées à la glèbe, et qui font consister leur felicité à se voir libres comme des oiseaux, ainsi qu'ils le disent en parlant de leur vie nomade.
>
> [An ancient tradition holds that the Kirkis will lose their freedom as soon as they live in houses and devote themselves to agriculture. The example of the Bashkirs illustrates the plausibility of such a prediction, and the fear that it will come to pass must deter these tribes on the borders of the Russian empire from taking up agricultural occupations, for they dread nothing more than being bound to a plot of land, and happiness for them is being as free as birds, which is how they describe their nomadic life.][63]

The existentialism dictated by the condition of the Kirkis described in this passage, whereby they are *compelled* to be nomads or else they become

63 Abel-Rémusat, p. 517.

extinct (with the implications for everyday life deriving from the constraints of constant motion), is another example of the kind of material Leopardi found of relevance to his own thought and poetic mission about the meaning of life and the pain of existence. As we will see, he captures the existentialism of the nomadic condition in 'Canto notturno'. Most importantly, the Kirkis, despite inhabiting a state of nature and an apparent world of illusions, seem to be inclined to melancholy – which Leopardi noticed with great interest – and spend the night watching the moon and singing sad songs:

> Plusieurs d'entre eux passent la nuit assis sur une pierre à regarder la lune, et à improviser des paroles assez tristes sur des airs qui ne le sont pas moins. Ils composent même des compliments en verse, et répondent par des impromptus de cette espèce aux paroles qu'on leur addresse.
>
> [Many of them spend half the night sitting on a stone watching the moon, and coming up with rather sad lyrics to accompany airs of equal sadness. They even compose compliments in verse, and respond to the words that are addressed to them with improvised answers, also in verse.][64]

It is no surprise that Leopardi showed an interest in this image: all the principal elements of his thought and poetry revolved around the notion of the state of nature and the lamentation of its absence in modernity.

In the *Zibaldone*, Leopardi also noted the historical nature of these songs, in that they sing about the glories of their heroes. As Emilio Bigi also points out, the idea of singing as a way of remembering heroic gestures will have reminded Leopardi of his own concern with the 'rimembranze eroiche' [heroic remembrance] and the memory of ancient heroism.[65] Similarly, Leopardi will have been drawn to the Orientalist context of narrating the primitive world, or the gaze on the primitive world from the point of view of its antithesis, modern knowledge. This is a world untouched by civil society, reason, and

64 Abel-Rémusat, p. 518.

65 Emilio Bigi, *La genesi del canto notturno e altri studi sul Leopardi* (Palermo: Manfredi, 1967), p. 130.

modern civilisation, and yet it is described through Western science by a European imperialist. Illusions and knowledge consitute the two sides of Leopardi's existentialist apparatus: Leopardi thus considered the dual nature of this text to be exemplary of the tension between illusion and knowledge, and so an inspiration for the shaping of his shepherd's interrogation of nature.

Interrogations of nature in the Orient: A close reading of 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia'

The poem begins with the shepherd asking the moon the purpose of her existence, with the ultimate aim of drawing a comparison between mortal and non-mortal life, including between humans and nature: 'Che fai tu, luna, in ciel?' [What are you doing, moon, up in the sky?], asks the shepherd. A similarity of purpose is thus established by depicting the purpose of the existence of the moon and that of the shepherd. As he narrates how the moon rises in the evening and goes about observing the deserts, only to set in the morning, every day, the shepherd asks whether this repetition is not tedious for the moon, that is, if she is still 'vaga ... di mirar queste valli' [tired of plying the eternal byways] (1–6). The introduction of the theme of tediousness is the backdrop against which Leopardi stages a comparison between the shepherd's and the moon's lives, where human alienation from nature can be explored. His first reflection is that the shepherd's life seems to have much in common with that of the moon. Leopardi establishes the state of nature, with its governing rules, and the shepherd is depicted in seeming harmony with nature: 'sorge in sul primo albore; / move la greggia oltre pel campo, e vede / greggi, fontane ed erbe; / poi stanco si riposa la sera: / altro mai non ispera' [he rises at first light, / moves his flock across the fields, and sees / sheep, springs, and grass, / then, weary, rests at evening, / and hopes for nothing more] (11–15). From this first parallel, however, the poet hints that mortal and non-mortal lives cannot really be the same: 'dimmi o luna: a che vale / al pastor la sua vita, / La vostra vita a voi? Dimmi: ove tende / questo vagar mio breve, / il tuo corso immortale?' [tell me, moon, what good / is

the shepherd's life to him / or yours to you? Tell me: where is tending, / my brief wandering, / your immortal journey?] (16–20). Leopardi goes on to describe the pain of human life, as opposed to non-human life, by creating pastoral images imbued with modern disenchantment and the existentialist physicality of a nomadic life of pain in which nature poses a constant challenge. Here the 'Vecchierel bianco, infermo / mezzo vestito e scalzo / con gravissimo fascio is su le spalle' [Little old white-haired man, / weak, half naked, barefoot, / with an enormous burden on his back] goes 'per montagna e per valle' [up mountain and down valley] (21–24), and thus continuously struggles *against* nature:

> Per sassi acuti, ed alta rena, e fratte,
> Al vento, alla tempesta e quando avvampa
> L'ora, e quando poi gela,
> Corre via, corre, anela,
> Varca torrenti e stagni,
> Cade, risorge, e più e più s'affretta,
> Senza posa o ristoro,
> Lacero, sanguinoso; infin ch'arriva
> Colà dove la via
> E il tanto affaticar fu volto:
> Abisso orrido, immenso,
> Ov'ei precipitando, il tutto obblia.
>
> [Over sharp rocks, across deep sands and bracken, / through wind and storm, / in hot and freezing weather, / runs on, running till he's out of breath, / crosses rivers, wades through swamps, / falls and climbs and rushes on / ever faster, no rest or relief, / battered, bloodied; till at last he comes / to where his way / and all his efforts led him: / terrible, immense abyss / into which he falls, forgetting everything.] (25–36)

This is the state of nature seen through the lens of reason: and the truth is that mortal life is a constant struggle against nature: 'Vergine luna, tale / è la vita mortale' [This, O virgin moon, / is human life] (37–8). The pain of human existence is then narrated in its fullness, from the pain and struggle of birth to the mother's consolations first 'dell'esser nato' [for being born] (44), and then 'dell'umano stato' [for being human] (49). The shepherd asks again whether such pain is a peculiarly mortal

condition: 'Se la vita è sventura, / perchè da noi si dura? / Intatta luna, tale / è lo stato mortale. Ma tu mortal non sei, e forse del mio dir poco ti cale' [If life is misery, / why do we bear it? / This, unblemished mood, / is mortal nature. / But you're not mortal, / and what I say may matter little to you] (55–60). He hypothesises that the moon may know 'il perchè delle cose' [the why of things] (70) due to her immortal nature; she may know 'a qual suo dolce amore / rida la primavera' [for whose sweet love / spring smiles] (73–4), and 'A chi giovi l'ardore' [who enjoys the heat] (75) and 'il verno coi suoi ghiacci' [what winter and its ice are for] (76), and all the other things which are unknown to the 'semplice pastore' [simple shepherd] (78) – an ironic remark, as the shepherd embodies the consciousness of scientific enquiry. But for him, it is not the same, and he is compelled to ask the significance of all: 'E quando guardo miro in cielo arder le stelle; / Dico fra me pensando: / A che tante facelle?' [And when I see the stars burn up in heaven, / I ask myself: / why all these lights?]. Once again, why? But no answer is found: 'cosi meco ragiono ... D'ogni celeste, ogni terrena cosa, / Girando senza posa, / per tornar sempre la donde son mosse: / uso alcuno, alcun frutto / Indovinar non so' [I ask myself: about this boundless / wondrous space ... of all heavenly and earthly things, / revolving without rest, / only to return to where they started; / any purpose, any usefulness / I cannot see] (90–98). This awareness of human insignificance with regard to nature brings the shepherd to the nihilistic conclusion that all is suffering: 'Che degli eterni giri, / che dell'essere mio frale, Qualche bene o contento / avrà frose altri; a me la vita è male' [That from the eternal motions, / from my fragile being, / others may derive / some good or gladness; life for me is wrong] (101–4).

The shepherd then repeats the same interrogation with his 'greggia' [flock], which he addresses as 'beata' [blessed] and ignorant of 'la miseria tua' [your own misery] (105–6). The sheep's lack of consciousness corresponds to their lack of pain and raises questions regarding their potential to feel. As opposed to the poet, the flock feels no tedious: 'quando tu [greggia] siedi all'ombra [...] tu se' queta e contenta; / E [...] senza noia consumi in quello stato' [when you [flock] lie down in the shade ... you are calm, content, / and ... feel no boredom] (113–16). This is not a state

of happiness, though; it is a state in which the capacity to feel is denied by the impossibility of consciousness. It is the absence of consciousness and feeling that provide the conditions that allow the flock to be calm and content. As the shepherd attempts to achieve the same placid state, however, he fails due to his capacity for thought: 'un fastidio m'ingombra / La mente, ed uno spron quasi mi punge / Sì che, sedendo, più che mai son lunge / Da trovar pace o loco' [an anxiousness invades my mind / as if a thorn were were pricking me, / so that sitting there I'm even further / from finding peace or resting place] (120–1). It is the awareness or consciousness produced by the human mind associated with modern knowledge that, for Leopardi, creates the pain of existence.

Leopardi's aesthetic and philosophical ideas, as well as the climax of his existentialist Orientalism, come together at the close of the poem as he approaches his final interrogation and nihilistic conclusion. First, he ironically remarks on the possibility of achieving happiness by becoming non-human, and thus wonders about the loss of human consciousness, which is the source of pain: 'Forse s'avess'io l'ale / Da volar su le nubi … O come il tuono errar di giogo in giogo, / Più felice sarei, dolce mia greggia / Più felice sarei candida luna' [Maybe if I had wings / to fly above the clouds / … or, like thunder, graze from peak to peak, / I'd be happier, / my gentle flock, / happier, bright moon] (133–9). However, it is clear that non-human feeling is unintelligible to humans, and Leopardi can only speculate – surely with a touch of irony and Romantic Orientalism still in the background – that perhaps the non-human condition is similar to that of mankind and therefore characterised by the pain of existence: 'O forse erra dal vero, / mirando all'altrui sorte, il mio pensiero: / Forse in qual forma, in quale / Stato che sia, dentro covile o cuna, / È funesto a chi nasce il dì natale' [Or maybe my mind's straying from the truth, / imagining the destinies of others. / Maybe in whatever form or state, / be it in stall or cradle, / the day we're born is cause for mourning] (139–43). This condition of total existentialism shattered what Leopardi had always considered the deceitful hopes raised by Romantic Orientalism, thus creating a new nihilistic, negative Orientalism. Leopardi's engagement with Orientalism thus marks his philosophical and aesthetic protest not only against Romanticism and spirituality, but especially against European

modernity, its scientific knowledge and natural history, but also its fashionable trends. Unlike the Italian Romantics who celebrated Orientalism as a way to engage with the European centre, Leopardi snubbed and moved beyond Europe, even though he borrowed from its trends as he developed his critique of modernity and mocking of Orientalism, while anticipating twentieth-century existentialist thought.

Although short-lived in Risorgimento Italy, literary Orientalism constituted one of the cosmopolitan trends in the Classicist–Romantic quarrel as it was concerned with both European and non-European literary traditions. There is no doubt that the general resistance to Orientalism only served to bolster Classicism, which remained the dominant aesthetic trend in turn-of-the-century Italy. However, the debates involving literary Orientalism will have their legacy in the literature of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in movements such as realism and modernism that we will examine in Chapter 7. Unlike the literary Orientalism explored in Part I of this book, the realist and modernist Orientalism of Part II, as the scholarly expression that inspired it, will reflect the changes in the evolution of Italian nationalism and its more aggressive concerns with expansionism and European empire. As a way of concluding Part I, it is therefore important to stress that the reception of European Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy betrayed a concern with a libertarian and cosmopolitan nationalism. Indeed, Risorgimento Orientalism, although the root of the post-unification developments of Italian Orientalism, discussed none of the ethnic, religious, evolutionary, expansionist and imperial questions that characterise post-unification Orientalism, as Part II will demonstrate. In this sense, the exploration of Orientalism across the pre- and post-unification periods is particularly useful as it represents another lens through which to explore and better grasp the developments in Italian nationalism from the Risorgimento to fascism.

PART II

Indic Orientalism and Aryanism in Italy from Unification to Fascism

CHAPTER 4

Italian *Orientalistica*: Indology, Aryan Ideology and the Philological Sciences of Euromania

Italian *orientalistica*, like its European counterparts, developed in conjunction with the new impulse given by Italian Indology. In turn, *Indologia* gave way to the fields of comparative philology, religion and ethnology in Italy. These Indological fields influenced and informed new approaches to the study of other Oriental subjects – now all approached through the 'sciences' of language, religion and race – such as Islam, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, as well as Judaism and Coptism, Turkology and Sinology and, more broadly, colonial scholarship, ethnography and anthropology. *Indologia* also resulted in new interpretations of the Bible, classical paganism, and Christianity. Once the world was divided into Aryans and Semites as the two major civilisational and spiritual categories, the task of Italian Orientalists, as their European counterparts had already done, was to reconfigure world civilisations through the study of Oriental languages together with the ethnicities, cultures and religions of the people who spoke them.

Orientalistica produced interdisciplinary and comparative works with varying degrees of ideological investment. However, even those productions that were more genuinely scholarly in intent and effect were rarely totally free from ideology, or at least Eurocentric bias. Generally speaking, as will become clearer over the course of this book, *orientalistica* had two main focuses: one on the ancient Orient in relation to the past origins and progress of European nations, and Italy in the first instance; and another on the contemporary Orient, in the context of international relations, with an emphasis on the civilisational duties of the modern European nations, and Italy in particular, towards the 'non-modern' Oriental world. The scholarship about the past was relevant to the question of European

and Italian origins and progress, Europe's and Italy's past relations with the East, and the relationship between classical paganism, Christianity and other Oriental religions, as well as that between Europeans and non-European peoples at large. In other words, such scholarship provided the new Italian nation with identity, and in particular that Western identity that enabled the new European nation to define itself as 'modern' in light of Aryan historical progress – an element that was also related to the civilisational duty of modern colonialism. The scholarship on the present focused largely – but not exclusively – on the relationship between the West and the East as one shaped by colonialism, commerce and foreign policy, and again informed by Eurocentric, or Aryan, bias. In this sense, Orientalist scholars were much more irreverent when talking about the contemporary Orient. Like the rest of European academic Orientalism, *orientalistica*, too, was devoted to the cause of colonialism, and this emerged most powerfully in the ethnographical studies Italian Orientalists conducted regarding the people of the Italian colonies. With the advent of fascism, *orientalistica*, as well as its concerns regarding imperialism, became a propaganda tool that aimed to reach out to Oriental territories, often under British rule, with a view to establishing a fascist influence. In both the scholarship on the past and the present, however, Italian Orientalism exhibited some sort of 'Euromania' – an obsession with Europe, its identity, its political influence and its modern status, and Italy's place in it. Just as during the Risorgimento commentators sought to assess Italy's relationship to European modernity through their discussion of models of modern identity through Orientalism and Classicism, Italy's main purpose in the period between unification and fascism was to create a place in Europe for itself, a place in that modern, Western racial identity construct. While Classicism was no doubt a useful instrument in this regard, it was Orientalism, more than any other cultural and intellectual tool, that could ultimately define Italy's Europeanness and Westernness at this moment in history.

With regard to the past, it is crucial to mention that, by the time professional Orientalism took off in Italy, the Aryan idea in Europe had already developed an ambiguous, anti-Classicist and anti-Semitic rhetoric which had put forward ideas of Latin and Semitic degeneration. These ideas of degeneration critiqued notions established by the classical philology of

the Italian Renaissance, which considered Hebrew and Judaism to be inextricably linked to classical and modern European languages, cultures and religions. According to German Orientalism, it was precisely these Latinate and Semitic elements that had corrupted European culture, the renewal of which could only take place by ridding it of these corrupting elements and replacing them with reinvigorating Indo-Germanic – rather than simply Indo-European – constituents. Although German Orientalism had put forward a rhetoric of Latin (and Italian) degeneration, Italian Orientalism aimed to rehabilitate Italy's role within Aryan modernity by emphasising Rome's centrality in Indo-European progressive history. The rhetoric of Roman progress that *orientalistica* developed within the rhetoric of Aryanism pointed to a reconciliation between Classicism and Orientalism. Through the Aryan idea, Orientalists dealt with Italian modern nationhood in a new pan-European way, with a global but Eurocentric view according to which the Aryan peoples and their nations led the way. This global approach was imbued with a Euromania rooted in two main questions: first, Italy felt like – and undoubtedly was – the cultural heartland of Europe fallen into decline since the seventeenth century; and second, primacy within the idea of Europe had been taken away from Italy by northern European nations that were now dictating cultural and political standards to which the new Italian nation was somehow expected to adhere if it was to be recognised as a modern European nation. This chapter aims to study the development of the Aryan idea in Italian comparative philology's reconstructions of the various evolutionary stages of the Aryan family in Italy.

The institutions, scholars and fields of Italian professional Orientalism

As already seen in Chapter 1, the birth of an Italian expression of the new modern European academic Orientalism can be traced back to the emergence of Indology and the publication of Gaspare Gorresio's translation

of the *Ramayana* between 1843 and 1858.[1] However, it was not until after Italian unification in 1861 that *orientalistica* really grew in Italy.[2] The growth of post-unification Italian Orientalism, and especially Indology, saw Florence become its centre and Angelo De Gubernatis its main promoter.[3] De Gubernatis' interest in India began when, as the first graduate in Italian letters of the newly proclaimed Italian Kingdom, he participated in a competition for a work on the origins of the Italian language sponsored by the *Accademia Pontiana* of Naples in 1862. In the preface to his piece, De Gubernatis wrote an introduction on the comparative history of the Indo-European languages, which marked the beginning of a life-long interest in Sanskrit, comparative philology and mythology. Between 1862 and 1863, De Gubernatis studied in Berlin with Albrecht Weber and Franz Bopp. In 1863, he was asked to return to Italy by the Education Minister, the Orientalist Michele Amari, to be nominated Professor of Sanskrit at the *Istituto di studi superiori pratici e di perfezionamento* of Florence. The *Istituto* was created in 1860 with the intention of making it Italy's leading academic institution. In the post-unification period, Florence was seen as the most innovative cultural centre in Italy and this was reflected in the institute's engagement with European positivism in the latter part of the nineteenth century and with idealism in the earlier part of the twentieth century.[4] De Gubernatis' arrival at the *Istituto* was instrumental to the growth of Orientalist studies in that city and in Italy, as well as to the

1 An interesting account of Italian Indology is provided by Enrico Pappacena, *Arte antica e scienza moderna: esposizione dei capolavori epici e drammatici dell'India antica e breve storia dell'Indologia specialmente di quella italiana* (Carpi: Gualdi, 1934).

2 De Gubernatis, *Matériaux*, pp. 337–8.

3 For a detailed account of De Gubernatis' activity as a promoter of Orientalism in Florence, as well as a promoter of Italy in India and of India in Italy, including the founding of the Indian museums in Florence and Bologna, and the organisation of various Indian exhibitions in Italy, see Filipa Lowndes Vicente, *Altri orientalismi*.

4 For an insightful account of the history of the Florentine *Istituto*, see Eugenio Garin, *La cultura italiana tra '800 e '900. Studi e ricerche* (Bari: Laterza, 1962), pp. 29–76.

creation of links between the *Istituto* and many other cultural institutions and intellectual circles in Florence and throughout Italy.[5]

It is important to address the history and development of Italian academic Orientalism at the Florentine *Istituto* by spelling out that positivism constituted the philosophical method underpinning *orientalistica* between the 1860s and the 1890s. The influence of German-born Orientalist Max Müller was felt in both Italian positivist and Orientalist circles alike as he had become representative of both European positivism and Orientalism in Italy. Although Müller was influenced by both idealism and positivism, in Italy his work was interpreted positivistically, as evidenced by Pasquale Villari's use of Müller in his work on Italian positivism. In his 'La filosofia positiva e il metodo storico' (1866), considered the manifesto of Italian positivism, Villari devoted a great deal of attention to Müller's work. Villari explained that Müller had dealt with one of the oldest philosophical debates, one that had been very much revived by European Orientalism: the question of whether language had divine or human origins. In Müller's opinion, Villari tells us, in order to enquire into the origins and development of language, an investigation into the history of the human spirit was necessary. This investigation, however, needed to be carried out using the method of the natural sciences: 'se vogliamo conoscere la storia dei linguaggi e la loro natura, dobbiamo fare come facciamo, quando colla botanica o la zoologia vogliamo conoscere la storia delle piante e degli animali' [if we want to know the history of languages and their nature, we must study them as we study botany or zoology when we want to know the history of plants and of animals].[6] On the one hand, Villari goes on to explain, language is a manifestation of the human spirit, and the science of language is a science that studies the moral and intellectual nature of man. On the other hand, however, philology and linguistics use the naturalist method to study

5 Francesco Solitario, 'Angelo De Gubernatis: pioniere dell'orientalistica italiana nell'ottocento', in *La rinascenza orientale nel pensiero europeo. Pionieri lungo tre secoli*, ed. Grazia Marchianò (Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1996), pp. 165–99 (168–70).

6 Pasquale Villari, 'La filosofia positiva ed il metodo storico', in *Saggi di storia, di critica e di politica. Nuovamente raccolti e riveduti dall'autore* (Florence: Cavour, 1868), pp. 1–36 (27).

and classify languages, their age and families, including the laws regulating their birth, development and death, 'per generi e specie, come si fa delle piante o degli animali' [by gender and species, as we do for plants or animals].[7] Thus, the new historical method, once applied to the moral sciences, is given the same importance that the experimental method has in natural sciences. This is, of course, useful in order to determine 'il cammino e lo svolgersi delle lingue dei primi popoli Ariani, accompagnandoli di passo in passo sino a noi' [the migration and the development of the languages of the first Aryan peoples, to escort them, step by step, up to our times].[8] Villari's manifesto impacted the whole of the Italian positivist historical school centred primarily around the Florentine institute. It is crucial to stress that this school had emerged from the ashes of the idealistic tradition of Francesco De Sanctis, and by now included many of the Orientalist, anthropological and Classicist figures explored in this book, including De Gubernatis and Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, but also Michele Kerbaker, Domenico Pezzi, Giacomo Lignana, Carlo Puini, Gaetano Trezza, Cesare Lombroso, Giuseppe Sergi and Alfredo Niceforo.[9] From the 1890s onwards, however, positivism experienced a decline and the Florentine institute became a centre of idealism, as well as Orientalism, as represented by figures such as Paolo Pavolini.

In the wake of the establishment of the first chairs of Sanskrit in the 1860s, the first Italian translations of the major Orientalist works in the field of Indology and comparative philology written in Europe – mainly in Britain and Germany – were published. Among these were Max Müller's *Letture sopra la scienza del linguaggio, dette nel R. Istituto della Gran Bretagna nei mesi di aprile, di maggio e di giugno nell'anno 1861*, translated by Gherardo Nerucci and published in 1864,[10] Karl Wilhem Heyse's

7 Villari, 'La filosofia positiva', p. 27.

8 Villari, 'La filosofia positiva', p. 28.

9 Gabriele Burrini, 'Un sodalizio di poeti: I rapporti tra Édouard Schuré e Angelo De Gubernatis', in *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, i, pp. 115–56 (152).

10 Max Müller, *Letture sopra la scienza del linguaggio, lette nel R. Istituto della Gran Bretagna nei mesi di aprile, di maggio e di giugno nell'anno 1861*, trans. Gherardo Nerucci (Milan: Daelli, 1864). This translation is from the English edition of *Lectures on the Science of Language* published in 1861 in London. It should be noted that

Sistema della scienza delle lingue, translated by Enrico Leone in 1868, August Schleicher's *Compendio di grammatica comparativa dello antico indiano, greco ed italico*, and Leo Meyer's *Lessico delle radici indo-italo-greche*, both translated by Domenico Pezzi and published in 1869. In 1874, Nerucci also translated Müller's *Quattro lezioni d'introduzione alla scienza delle religioni*, which, for the first time, introduced in Italy the idea of a comparative mythology, according to the model of comparative philology, as the foundation for a 'science of religion'.[11]

After the translations, there came the Italian 'emulations'. De Gubernatis, like most of the Italian Orientalists, was influenced in particular by Franz Bopp's comparative grammar of Latin, Greek and Sanskrit and the work of Max Müller. De Gubernatis' contributions to Italian Orientalism range from translations of Indian texts into Italian to books on comparative philology, mythology and archaeology; and on Indian literature, the history of religions, and popular culture and traditions. Other works include travel writings about India and other countries, memoirs of Italian travellers to India, and Orientalist bibliographies. Generally speaking, these works are not notable for their originality and insight, but rather for the dissemination of Orientalist ideas, in the context of Italy's past and contemporary relations with India and the Orient. De Gubernatis widely disseminated the work

---

the German Orientalist Max Müller worked in England, because of the lack of Indologists in Britain, where Indian subjects were at the time not especially popular. Victorian Britain hired Indologists from Germany for the Indian empire. Hence, Max Müller's most important publications are in English. For a detailed account of German Orientalists working in Britain, see Thomas Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, pp. 62–98. The transfer of Indomania from Britain to Germany was felt in Italy too, as Italian Orientalists of the late nineteenth century worked closely with their German counterparts, whereas earlier Italian Orientalists, like Gorresio, for instance, had worked closely with British Orientalists such as Horace Wilson.

11 Karl Wilhem Heyse, *Sistema della scienza delle lingue*, trans. Enrico Leone (Turin: Botta, 1864); August Schleicher, *Compendio di grammatica comparativa dello antico indiano, greco ed italico*, trans. Domenico Pezzi (Turin: Loescher, 1869); Leo Meyer, *Lessico delle radici indo-italo-greche*, trans. D. Pezzi (Turin: Loescher, 1869); Max Müller, *Quattro lezioni d'introduzione alla scienza delle religioni*, trans. G. Nerucci (Florence: Sansoni, 1874).

and thought of Max Müller in Italy and made considerable use of Müller's ideas in his eclectic works on comparative philology and mythology.[12] In spite of a lack of originality, De Gubernatis proved a great promoter of professional Orientalism in Italy. He founded the *Società asiatica italiana* in 1886 on the model of the English, French, German and American Asiatic societies, and in the same year he also created the *Museo Indiano* in Florence, which in 1891 became part of the *Museo di etnologia e antropologia* founded by the anthropologist Paolo Mantegazza and also based in Florence. De Gubernatis edited many of the major Italian Orientalist journals such as the *Giornale della Società asiatica italiana* and the *Rivista di studi orientali*. Furthermore, he brought the fourth International Congress of Orientalists to Florence in 1878, and the ninth to Rome in 1899.[13]

Other key figures in Italian Orientalism include Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, who, after an initial interest in comparative philology, became Professor of Linguistics and Dialectology at Milan's *Accademia scientifico-letteraria*, and established himself as an authority in his field with works such as *Studj orientali e linguistici* (1854), *Studj critici* (1861) and *Lezioni di fonologia comparata del sanscrito, del greco e del latino* (1870). The theory of an Indo-European family of languages proved foundational to Ascoli's groundbreaking work on the *Questione della lingua*.[14] Michele Kerbaker, Giacomo Lignana and Domenico Pezzi also became leading Orientalists, Sanskritists and Aryanists thanks to their translations of Indian works

12 Among De Gubernatis' works in which he disseminated European Orientalism at large and the work of Müller in particular, the following are of particular note: *Il sanscrito in Europa. Cenni* (1864), *Fonti vediche dell'epopea illustrata* (1867), *Storia comparata degli usi nuziali in Italia e presso gli altri popoli indo-europei* (1869), *Zoological Mythology* (1872), *Storia popolare degli usi funebri indo-europei* (1873), *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (1874), *Max Müller e la mitologia comparata* (1875), *Mitologia comparata* (1880), *Letture di archeologia indiana* (1881), and *Storia universale della letteratura* (1882–6).

13 For a detailed bibliography of all of De Gubernatis' work see Solitario, 'Angelo De Gubernatis: pioniere dell'orientalistica italiana', pp. 190–9.

14 Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, *Scritti sulla questione della lingua* (1967). This question occupied centre stage in post-unification Italian culture and was concerned with the spread of the Italian language throughout the national territory.

and their writings on comparative philology. Kerbaker was Professor of Comparative Philology and Sanskrit at the University of Naples, and wrote important works such as *La filologia comparata e la filologia classica* (1875) and translated several poetic works from the *Vedic Hymns* to the *Mahabharata* (1936–39). Lignana, who occupied a similar chair at the University of Bologna, is best remembered for his *La filologia al secolo XIX* (1868). Pezzi was Professor of Comparative Philology at Turin University and made an important contribution to the field with his *Grammatica storico-comparativa della lingua latina* (1872). Moreover, Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, through his work on ethnology, became representative of the link between comparative philology, linguistics and ethnology. He taught at various universities, including Padua and Bologna, where he was Professor of Indo-European Philology and Linguistics. Besides his *Grammatica sanscrita* (1883), he also wrote a 'Profilo antropologico d'Italia' (1898) and *Italia. Genti e favelle* (1927), which, as will be seen in the Epilogue, were eventually used by fascist racial theorists to lend academic and scientific legitimacy to fascist Aryanism and racial legislation.

Oriental religions were also the focus of many Orientalist scholars, and most Sanskritists, Islamists, Hebraists, and Sinologists began to write on religion in relation to Aryanism in particular from the turn of the century, thus making it a relatively widespread topic of research and study in the idealist years of the beginning of the twentieth century. Carlo Puini, Professor of the History and Geography of East Asia at the Florentine *Istituto di studi superiori*, published, for instance, *Il Buddha, Confucio e Lao-tse* (1878) and *Saggi di storia delle religioni* (1882), thus showing an interest in the new science of religion, which had not yet received much attention or seen the emergence of an indigenous Italian production until then. The new 'scientific' approach to religion meant that Aryan and Semitic religions were revisited according to the new hierarchies and connotations established by Indology and Aryanism. David Castelli, Professor of Hebrew at Florence University, also adopted this positivistic approach to religion and he revisited biblical questions through the lens of modern Orientalism and positivism in works such as *Il messia secondo gli ebrei* (1874), *La profezia nella Bibbia* (1882) and translations such as *Il poema semitico del pessimismo: il libro di Job* (1895). In these works, Castelli developed interpretations of

the Bible based on the historical contexts in which they were produced and in light of a secular consciousness and philological exegesis informed by the new Orientalist philology. The new scientific approach meant that religions were studied positivistically and as historical, cultural and political phenomena, at least until positivism began to go into crisis at the turn of the century.

Paolo Pavolini, Professor of Sanskrit and Indian Civilisation at the Florentine *Istituto di studi superiori*, for instance, influenced by the crisis of positivism and the emergence of a new wave of idealism, published works such as *Il Buddismo* (1898), a work that called for more attention to inner values and life in light of the crisis of positivism. Similarly, Italo Pizzi, Professor of Persian, Sanskrit and Arabic first at the *Istituto* and then at the University of Turin, whose publications include a translation of the *Avesta* and a history of Persian poetry, published in 1903 a book on Islam entitled *Islamismo*, in which he dealt with Islam by placing it in a subordinate relationship with Aryanism. Two central figures in the idealist Indology of the early twentieth century were Carlo Formichi and Giuseppe Tucci. They were the two most important Indologists of the first part of the twentieth century, who also lent their expertise to fascist ideology and foreign policy. Formichi was Professor of Sanskrit at the universities of Pisa and Rome, and his most popular works include: *Il pensiero religioso e filosofico dell'India* (1912), which he published with Fernando Belloni-Filippi and which went on to contribute to the spread of idealism in cultural and intellectual circles in early twentieth-century Florence; and *Apologia del Buddismo* (1923), where the fascist influence is felt in the way in which Buddhism's emphasis on interiority and spirituality is linked to notions of the State as a spiritual entity. Tucci, on the other hand, is considered to be one of the world's greatest Indologists, and he is particularly famous for his work on Tibetan mysticism and magic entitled *Indo-Tibetica* (1932–41). Luigi Suali, Professor of Sanskrit at the University of Pisa, combined religion and philosophy and wrote books such as *Introduzione alla filosofia Indiana* (1912), *L'illuminato: storia del Buddha* (1925). In the latter, Suali drew strong parallels between Buddha and Christ, also in line with the revival of idealism and spiritual trends in fascist Italy.

Together with Indology – or, rather, as a result of Indology's philological revolution – other fields of Orientalism developed in the period between national unification and the advent of fascism. Although it was felt that Indology was of greater relevance to many aspects of European culture, particularly in light of its relationship to Classicism and Christianity, other areas that were already in existence, but less popular, such as Sinology, Coptic and Semitic Studies (which included Arabic and Hebrew Studies), also saw the establishment of new chairs at the Florentine *Istituto* and universities throughout Italy. In the field of Sinology, along with Puini, but also Antelmo Severini, it is worth mentioning Lodovico Nocentini, Professor of East Asian Languages at the University of Rome. Nocentini's important works include translations such as *La ribellione di Mascado e Sumitomo* (1878) and *Il santo editto di K'an-Hi e l'amplificazione di Yun-Cen* (1882). Nocentini also wrote political texts related to an Italian colonial interest in China such as *L'Europa nell'Estremo Oriente e gli interessi dell'Italia in Cina* (1904).[15] In the field of Arabic, along with Michele Amari, and his disciple Celestino Schiapparelli, the prolific scholar Carlo Alfonso Nallino is particularly noteworthy. His work ranges from Arabic grammars and translations of Arabic literature to more politically motivated works related to Italian colonialism, such as *Appunti sulla natura del 'Califfato' in genere e sul presunto 'Califfato Ottomano'* (1917). Nallino also played a central role in Italian colonial policies and education, particularly the formation of Italian colonial administrators in Libya. Michelangelo Guidi, son of the other illustrious Orientalist Ignazio Guidi, took, like his father, a more comparative approach to Arabic, which often involved comparisons between the Arabic and Coptic languages and literatures. This approach is evident in works such as *Contributi alla agiografia etiopica* (1916). Other works such as *Storia della religione dell'Islam* (1936) and *Roma e il mondo islamico* (1938), have a strong political dimension and betray Italian fascism's attempts to forge alliances with Islam.

Another important field that experienced a revival through *orientalistica* was Turkology, as represented by scholars such as Luigi Bonelli,

15 See Maurizio Marinelli and Giovanni Andornino, eds, *Italy's Encounters with Modern China: Imperial Dreams, Strategic Ambitions* (New York: Palgrave, 2014).

who published works such as *Manuale di turco parlato* (1910) and *Lessico italiano-turco* (1939). Turkology was not Bonelli's only interest, however. He is best known for his Italian translation of the Koran, *Corano* (1929), which, according to another illustrious Orientalist, Francesco Gabrieli, was 'quella versione italiana del Corano che dette per la prima volta nella nostra lingua, dopo un infelice precedente, una fedele traduzione leggibile del Libro sacro dell'Islam' [that Italian version of the Koran which gave for the first time, after an unsuccessful precedent, a faithful translation of the holy book of Islam].[16] Another Turkologist, Ettore Rossi, showed great interest in the international relations of the Islamic world. He contributed greatly to the major journal of Oriental contemporary affairs, *Oriente Moderno*, a fascist utilitarian journal established in 1922 that provided insights into the politics, economics, and social life of the contemporary Oriental world, with the ultimate aim of ascertaining ways of establishing links with fascism, and exerting Italian and fascist influence. Among his political works, it is worth mentioning *Documenti sull'origine e lo sviluppo della questione araba* (1944), which evidences fascism's friendly attitude towards the Arab world, the question of Palestine and pan-Arabism. With regard to Italian colonialism in particular, two scholars of the Coptic languages are especially noteworthy: Carlo Conti Rossini and Enrico Cerulli. Conti Rossini published works such as 'Schizzo etnico delle popolazioni dell'Eritrea' (1916), *Abissinia* (1929) and *Italia and Etiopia. Dal trattato d'Uccialli alla battaglia di Adua* (1935), which deal with the Italian colonial campaign in East Africa. Similarly, Cerulli, who is considered one of the greatest Orientalist scholars on the Horn of Africa, was a strong supporter of Italian and fascist colonialism and managed to combine great scholarship and colonial fervour. Among his many publications are *Etiopia Occidentale (dallo Scioa alla frontiera del Sudan). Note del viaggio, 1927–1928* (1937), *Studi etiopici* (1935–51), and *Etiopi in Palestina. Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme* (1943–7).

It is beyond the scope of this book to provide an exhaustive account of Orientalist scholars and institutions in post-unification Italy, but this brief

16 Francesco Gabrieli, *Orientalisti del Novecento* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1993), p. 100.

survey of some of the most significant chairs, scholars, works, fields and themes will probably suffice to give a sense of the concerns and breadth of *orientalistica*. Post-unification Italy's engagement with modern Orientalism was a phenomenon driven by the desire for scientific progress and a sort of Euromania which sought to align Italy with the rest of Europe in terms of cultural trends and global politics. It was especially driven by the desire to forge for the new Italian nation the modern European identity associated with the new Aryan notion – a cultural but also racial identity which, in all other major Western European nations, by the late nineteenth century, had become the prime instrument for defining Westernness (against Easternness, i.e. non-Westernness). Thus, 'Aryan Italy' began the study of its origins in India, and its present in Europe, in a new, typically modern, Western fashion, which entailed a new set of standards established by the larger European Orientalist network. It is interesting to note that Italy, by the turn of the century, could boast one of the largest groupings of Orientalist scholars and institutions in Europe.[17] It is important at this point to understand the full intellectual dimension of Aryanism, both in European and Italian Orientalism, with particular reference to the reconstruction of hierarchies of world civilisation, according to Aryan historicity and the Aryan–Semitic divide.

European Orientalism, comparative philology and Aryan historicity

In their narratives of Aryan historicity, Italian Orientalists were primarily influenced by the philological work of a number of European (primarily French and German) Orientalists. Max Müller was the most influential

17 See R. M. Cimino and F. Scialpi, *India and Italy*. For a general bibliographical work on early twentieth-century Italian Orientalism, see Giuseppe Gabrieli, *Bibliografia degli studi orientalistici in Italia dal 1912 al 1934. Raccolta, con introduzione storica, da G. Gabrieli* (Rome: Società Poligrafica Italiana, 1935).

Aryanist as he was the first to use the term Aryan to refer to the Indo-European family of languages, peoples and culture. Other influential Aryanists in Europe included Orientalists such as Ernest Renan and Arthur De Gobineau. As Robert Young has pointed out, Renan had been responsible for putting forward 'the idea that history took the form of a dialogue, or conflict, between the Aryans and the Semites'.[18] De Gobineau, on the other hand, was no anti-Semite, but believed that all civilisations had been created by the Aryans.[19] Writing in the heyday of positivism, all of these scholars developed debates on the relationship between language, ethnicity and religion in the context of the reconstructions of the history of the Aryan people.

For Italian Orientalists, the allure of the Aryan idea lay also in its pan-European dimension. Nineteenth-century Aryanism was the ultimate cultural and intellectual instrument to cultivate the Italian desire for European belonging and world standing. Italian Orientalists traced Italian origins back to India and revisited Italian culture through an Aryan-European lens. In order to grasp the link between Aryanism and this Italian Euromania, it is important to contextualise the Aryan idea and investigate its meanings and purposes in relation to questions of European origins, progress and modern civilisation. Aryanism came to embody the historical path of Europe to modernity, world influence and domination. The reconstruction of the Aryan historical path in each European national context was a way of investigating national, as well as European, linguistic, ethnic and cultural characteristics with the aim of grouping all European nations on the basis of affinities, and separating them from Semitic and other non-European peoples on the basis of differences. Italian Indologists and Orientalists conducted the same kind of investigations as their European counterparts – especially Müller, Renan and De Gobineau – through the new discipline of comparative philology. In order to appreciate the arguments and themes developed by Italian Orientalists, it is necessary to consider the pioneers

18 Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 85.

19 Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 100.

of European Aryanism and see how their Italian counterparts emulated, critiqued and appropriated them.

Philology, Aryan historicity and Eurocentrism

The relationship between philology and Eurocentrism, of which the Aryan idea is the most prominent trope, is a central aspect of Said's argument in his *Orientalism*. When Said, building on Foucault's notion of discourse in knowledge production, talks about the academic meaning of Orientalism, he refers especially to this post-Enlightenment European study of the Orient, that is, an academic field which saw universalism and humanism as being centred on the European-Aryan experience.[20] Although it may be true that Said conflated the meaning of Orientalism with a general European colonial dimension, without making the due distinctions between kinds of knowledge production and national identity politics, he was right when he claimed that Eurocentric bias is a marker in a great deal of the Orientalist philology of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe.

Orientalist philology created the notion of Aryan historicity in order to engage with narratives of European progress and modernity. Michel Foucault unpacks Indo-European historicity in his analysis of the impact of philology on the theorisation of European modernity. He spells out that what Franz Bopp eventually did in Indo-Germanic philology was to show that there was a relation of fraternity between Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and the Germanic languages, with 'Sanskrit being, not the mother-language of the others, but rather their elder sister, the nearest of them to a language which had apparently been the source of this entire family'. Bopp was of course anticipating Müller's science of language in making links between philology and biology, but his pioneering comparative approach first proposed the idea of linguistic evolution. Foucault makes this notion apparent when he points out that 'historicity was introduced into the domain of languages in the same way as into that of living beings'. In order to be conceived in an evolutionary way 'organisms

20 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 100.

had to be ordered in accordance with the functional arrangements they were to perform'.[21] A new relationship between the human and natural sciences was thus forged, with philology emulating the methodologies of biology to legitimise the notion of a philological historicity, which also defined the more specific historical path of the Aryans, their languages, mythologies and ethnicities. Foucault explains that, once in biology the history of the species is 'suspended as a chronological sequence of all possible forms', living beings are able to assume their historicity. Similarly, in the sphere of language, 'if there had not been a suspension of the analysis of those endless derivations and limitless mixtures that general grammar perpetually presupposed, then language would never have been affected by an internal historicity'.[22] The historicity resulting from the simultaneous consideration of the Aryan linguistic geneaologies created a modality of formation, a history of languages, and a history of progress through language:

> Sanskrit, Greek, Latin and German had to be treated in accordance with a systematic simultaneity; breaking with all chronology, they had to be inserted into a fraternal time-system so that their structures could become transparent and a history of languages could become legible in them. Here as elsewhere, the arrangements into chronological series had to be broken up, and their elements redistributed, then a new history was constituted, one that does not merely express the mode of succession of beings and their connection in time, but the modality of their formation. Empiricity ... is henceforth traversed by History...[23]

The encounter between language and history pointed in time to the geneological progress not only of languages, but also of peoples and national identities all considered as organisms having an internal history and related through processes of formation and development. Although philology shared these processes with other disciplines such as biology, the peculiarity of philology was its relationship with thought and spirit, that is, with the inner life of humans rather than the exterior life of nature:

21 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London-New York: Routledge, 2004 [1970]), p. 319.

22 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 319.

23 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 319.

> Whereas nineteenth-century biology was to advance more and more towards the exterior of the living being, towards what lay beyond it, rendering progressively more permeable the surface of the body at which the naturalist's gaze had once halted, philology was to untie the relations that the grammarian had established between language and external history in order to define an internal history.[24]

This internal history of languages also debated about the origins, divine or otherwise, of language as a typically human characteristic and in relation to thought.

Markus Messling, building on Said and Foucault, further emphasises the centrality of the study of language and the structure of text – the essence of Orientalist philology – in the emergence of Eurocentrism and modern racism. As Messling argues, the 'essentialist, determinist, and biological theories of human symbolic production' that shaped the racism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries 'are the outgrowths of nineteenth-century philology' (i.e. comparative philology).[25] Messling explains that philology represented the European quest for origins and freedom, and that it then became a counter-history that led to racism. By 'linking language and the free destiny of men in a profound kinship'[26] – Messling quotes Foucault – philology played a crucial role in the struggle for freedom of various peoples, most of all the Germans (Messling refers to the role of Schleghel's Indomania in the quest for German origins and freedom, especially from the French universalism of the eighteenth century). Here, philology represented languages 'as the historical expression of the lives of particular peoples in which the organic whole became manifest', or, to put it in other words, 'philology delivers the narrative of unity that should provide the foundation for liberty'.[27] The problem, however, began when philology 'essentialized cultural characteristics' and gave way to 'organicist theories', creating hierarchies of languages, texts and worldviews shaped by Aryan ideology – although Messling points out that language thinkers

24 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 321.

25 Markus Messling, 'Philology and Racism: On Historicity in the Sciences of Language and Text', *Annales HSS 67*, no. 1 (January-March 2012), pp. 151–80 (153).

26 Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p. 317.

27 Messling, 'Philology and Racism', p. 157.

like Wilhem Von Humboldt had already warned in the 1820s that human formations should not be hierarchised and that there could not be just one fixed worldview for all the peoples that spoke Indo-European languages (for Humboldt, language is the instrument of thought and worldview).[28] Once these hierarchies are in place and come to constitute the basis of the scholarly and philological representation of non-Aryan human formations (languages, texts and worldviews), Eurocentrism and racism become inevitable. Orientalism at large engaged in the representation of Orientals, whether ancient or contemporary, and it did so through philology, ethnology, mythography and ethnography. In such representations, the 'natives' were often depicted, implicitly or explicitly, through the bias of Aryan ideology. It is important to stress that, for Messling, philology and ethnography emerged simultaneously in the context of 'the representation of the symbolic forms of foreign cultures' and 'in particular of their languages'. Between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries philology became institutionalised and produced the knowledge to understand the ancient and the modern world in a way that served science, history and politics. As a result, as Messling puts it, 'a new historical way of thinking, a positivist culture of knowledge arose … that expressed itself through empirical ethnography, a science of texts, and comparative historical linguistics and that was institutionalised as philological science'.[29]

Aryanism, progress and degeneration

One of the main features of the discourse of Aryan historicity was that Aryan progress was often juxtaposed with Latin and Semitic degeneration. This was central to Italian Aryanism, since German Orientalism had theorised about the decadence of Latin Europe in conjunction with the peak of Germanic Europe. The epistemological debate on comparative philology, religion and ethnology that established the progressivist or degenerationist nature of these Aryan narratives was based on questions of monogenism

28 Messling, 'Philology and Racism', p. 163.
29 Messling, 'Philology and Racism', p. 168.

and polygenism. It is therefore crucial to grasp how Italian Orientalists – but also anthropologists – responded to the new hierarchies of languages, religions and races. Scholars such as De Gubernatis, Lignana, Kerbaker and Puini, for instance, devised their own rhetoric of Roman-Aryan progress in order to counter claims of Latin degeneration. Although they reacted to ideas of Latin degeneration by focusing on the Italic-Roman progressive role in European Aryanism, they embraced anti-Semitism in order to adhere to the narratives of Westernness of European Orientalism. Let us now explore some of the more prominent ideas that shaped the narratives these Italian Orientalists.

Robert Young gives an account of the contradictory nature of these European racial narratives of progress and degeneration, and explains for instance how they interacted with biblical narratives:

> In general it would be fair to say that most progressivists were also monogenists, since polygenism in discarding any notion of the unity of mankind would no longer fit into a general narrative of human progress. But there was no logical reason why monogenists could not also be degenerationists, and many were, since both positions seemed to have the benefit of Biblical sanction. Polygenists, on the other hand, though instinctively degenerationists, could also be partial progressivists, to the extent that they could claim that while primitive races had remained static since their creation, civilised ones had progressed. Historical change could be accounted for by the argument that many of these would, however, have subsequently degenerated.[30]

The various perspectives on monogenism and polygenism were the result of different philosophical influences and the interaction between the human and the natural sciences. During the period of Romantic idealism, for instance, Schlegel and Bopp, two of the main pioneers of philological thought, had created a place for comparative philology within the human sciences akin to that of comparative anatomy within biology and the natural sciences. However, although they tended to assimilate comparative philology into the natural sciences, they detached the human linguistic capacity from pure animal faculty and assigned it to the realm of the divine. They achieved this by means of references to the linguistic

30 Robert Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 47.

and ethnic categories found in in the Bible. As George W. Stocking argues, 'early nineteenth-century comparative philology, like other humanistic inquiries in this period, still reflects various assumptions characteristic of the Biblical tradition'.[31] Although Schlegel's classification of languages had an ambiguously progressivist character, Bopp adopted the degenerationist idea of a genealogical relationship between languages. The presence of categories such as Semitic, Hamitic and Japhetic (the latter term was later replaced by the term Indo-European) point to the influence of the 'biblically based conception of world historical process as a sequential migration of populations from a central geographical point'.[32] Romantic intellectuals influenced by German Orientalism – from Johann Fichte through to Schlegel, Johann Herder and Georg Hegel – de-Judaised Christianity and gave it Indian origins, thus providing the intellectual support 'to visualise the progress of culture (or civilisation) as a movement from East to West across Asia, conceived in racial terms, with the Germanic peoples as the carriers of the purest or highest manifestation of the divine spirit'.[33] The inextricable link between philology, race and religion was thus forged and went on to shape Orientalist and especially Indological discourse.

Bopp's progressivist rhetoric, the way it was received by German Orientalism, and the discourse of German history and identity that stemmed from it also implied the idea of Latin degeneration. As Robert P. Goldman indicates, according to German Orientalists, the civilisation that had emerged from the Italian Renaissance and the European enlightenment 'had lost its original purity and been deformed by Latinate and Semitic influences'.[34] Comparative philology was now called Indo-Germanic, as the Germans claimed 'that they represented, in modern times, the pure continuation of the superior race, having inherited their language directly,

31 George W. Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1987), p. 24.

32 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 24.

33 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 25.

34 Robert P. Goldman, 'Indologies: German and Other', in *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958*, eds D. McGetchin, P. Park and D. SarDesai (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004), pp. 27–40 (33).

notably from the Persians'.[35] The new philology, as opposed to the classical philology of the Italian Renaissance in particular, denied any affinity of the Greeks and Latins with the Semites and Egyptians. By establishing direct kinship with India, German intellectuals attempted to overcome the idea of a Latin/Mediterranean-centred Europe and shifted the centre of Europe to the north and in particular to Germany.[36] This idea of Germanic racial superiority established by German Orientalism was to have an impact on European racial thought until 1945 at least.

The rhetoric of Germanic superiority and Latin-Semitic decadence was also embraced by the French Orientalist De Gobineau. He was an enthusiastic Orientalist who, like his German counterparts, greatly admired ancient Indian civilisation. De Gobineau's theory derived from a cultural relativism which saw civilisation as a temporal phenomenon. As a result of this view, he pessimistically envisioned the fall of Europe. Gobineau's catastrophic vision represented, in Young's words, 'an early (and influential) form of the cultural pessimism that was to become such a distinctive feature of later nineteenth-century thought'.[37] To the historical questions of decline and fall already explored by Edward Gibbon in his work on the Roman empire,[38] De Gobineau added the racial idea of degeneration. German Orientalism had already introduced the link between history and race, which Bartold Georg Niebhur then developed in the context of the history of Rome. At the same time, De Gobineau's new world vision appeared just a year after the formulation of the Second Law of Thermodynamics. According to this law, a decreasing amount of energy in the universe corresponded to increasing randomness and disorder. As a result, a 'sense of the gradual dissipation of the world into entropy' became 'irrefutable'.[39]

35 Schwab, *The Oriental Renaissance*, p. 184.

36 In the twentieth century, owing especially to Houstoun Chamberlain and Alfred Rosenberg, the development of terminology to refer to the 'superior' race resulted in the overlapping of terms such as 'Aryan', 'Germanic' or 'Nordic'.

37 Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 100.

38 Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (London: Strahan, 1776–88).

39 Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 100.

De Gobineau, in accordance with this law, elaborated his idea of civilisation in terms of interbreeding and colonisation. De Gobineau's starting point is the tendency of the Aryan race to mix their blood as a result of sexual attraction towards inferior races. The tragic flaw of civilisation lies in the fact that 'the Aryan races are impelled by a civilising instinct to mix their blood with the very races that will bring about their downfall'.[40] This was the case with the Latin race. Although Rome was Aryan, like most of Europe, the miscegenation between Romans and the African subjects of the empire had caused the degeneration of the Latin race and the collapse of the empire. According to De Gobineau, the Italian Renaissance had been possible because the Germanic incursions that took place after the collapse of Rome had rejuvenated Italy. Dante, Michelangelo and Raphael were all Germanic. In nineteenth-century Italy, the degeneration of the Latins was particularly visible in the southern Italian regions. This was due to the smaller number of Germanic migrations which had reached the south, as well as the Semitic (i.e. Muslim) incursions and settlements in that area.[41]

Aryans versus Semites

In the middle of the nineteenth century, other key intellectual figures such as Renan and Müller emerged and had a significant impact on Italian Orientalists. Although they were less keen to address Latin degeneration, they did focus on Semitic degeneration and contributed, consciously or unconsciously, to the spread of a racial Aryanism with a clear anti-Semitic slant, which proved highly influential in Italian narratives of Aryan historicity. Italian Orientalists, in their Aryan rhetoric, discriminated against both Judaism and Islam in favour of Vedism and Buddhism, while retaining an ambiguous attitude towards Christianity. Italian-Aryan narratives interpreted Christianity as either Semitic or Aryan depending on their authors' Aryan worldview (Aryan worldviews differed from scholar to

40 Young, *Colonial Desire*, p. 108.

41 Arthur De Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inegalité des races humaines*, 4 vols (Paris: Didot Frères, 1853–5), iv, pp. 163–4.

scholar, while retaining some common patterns). However, many Italian Orientalists shared the intention of using philology to secularise Italian approaches to religion, and Catholicism in particular, and to consolidate Italy's place within the modern Aryan-European family. Before moving on to analyse these narratives of Italian-Aryan historicity, it is worth dwelling for a moment on the main ideas they inherited from Renan and Müller in relation to the Aryan-Semitic divide.

Renan was a monogenist who believed that both Aryans and Semites originated from the same source. One of the main differences between them, though, was the progress shown by the Aryan languages, which had undergone constant transformation, as opposed to the stasis of Semitic languages. This was the result of Semitic monotheism, Maurice Olender reminds us, since both the revelation of monotheism and Semitic grammar were formed 'in an instant for all eternity'.[42] Thus Semitic languages were associated with the immutable, and the inalterability of the Semitic language was matched with 'the image of the Hebrew people as unchangeable'.[43] On the other hand, the Indo-European languages were associated with 'the movement of history' and proliferation. Rich in grammar and syntax, the Aryans were able to understand 'the animation of nature in its multiplicity'.[44]

The plurality of natural phenomena in Aryan languages would also translate into the names of gods in Aryan mythology, whether Hindu, Greek or Roman. For Renan, the spiritual dimension that had contributed to the Aryan predisposition to the delusions of mythology and the generation of gods was also what later led them to metaphysics, physics and the scientific method. Hebrew monotheism, on the other hand, had led to Islam, but both Semitic races lacked fertility in imagination and language and became an obstacle to human progress. Aryan polytheism, on the other hand, was responsible for the more moderate monotheism of Christianity, which Renan considered unrelated to Hebrew monotheism.[45] Although the

42 Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, p. 54.
43 Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, p. 54.
44 Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, pp. 55, 64.
45 P. Alfaric, *Les manuscripts de la "Vie de Jésus" d'Ernest Renan* (Paris, 1930), p. 26, cited in Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, p. 171.

Indian Vedas constituted the earliest revelation, Judaism was considered a superior religion, which, at the same time, was static. What followed was the Aryanisation of Christianity, as Renan confirms that it is true that 'le perfectionment successif du christianisme doit consister à s'éloigner de plus en plus du judaïsme pour faire prédominer dans son sein la gènie de la race indo-européenne' [the successive perfectionment of Christianity consisted in the ridding of its Judaic elements in order to let prevail in its bosom the genius of the Indo-European race].[46]

Müller's vision, on the other hand, departed considerably from the visions of De Gobineau and Renan, and his Aryanist rhetoric, although often imbued with blood, was more idealistic than Darwinian. As George W. Stocking maintains, Müller's thought was influenced both by German idealist philosophy and British empiricism, and in the study of Sanskrit and India he 'found a universal basis for religion in man's intuitive perception of the unseen divine power constituting the visible natural world'.[47] Aryan words, in Müller's theory of the divine, were richer and probably freer, more charming and certainly more seductive for the creative imagination. Unlike Semitic words, which were more apt to describe material realities, the Aryan vocabulary was best suited for the description of the supernatural. The observation of natural phenomena was traced by Müller to divine figures in the *Vedic Hymns*. A source of light, for instance, and in particular the sun, as Olender tells us, would be considered a 'supreme being', or 'the world's judgemental eye and the universal creative power'. Müller came to the ultimate conclusion that the Aryan languages, and in particular Sanskrit, were rich in metaphors and so conducive to mythology.[48] These ideas about the progressive nature of Aryan languages, the resulting creation of Aryan mythology as an observation of the natural world and the divine, and the Aryan inclination towards progress versus Semitic stagnation proved highly popular among the Italian latecomers to the world of European Orientalism: these Italian Orientalists appropriated

46 Ernest Renan, 'L'avenir religieux des sociétés modernes', in *Oeuvre Complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Clmann-Lévy, 1947 [1868]), p. 240.

47 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 57.

48 Olender, *The Languages of Paradise*, pp. 82, 84.

them for their own modernising, secularising, racialising and nationalising purposes, while cultivating Euromania through Aryan-Italic historicity.

Italian Orientalists, Euromania and Aryan-Italic historicity

Italians Orientalists borrowed and re-worked their fellow European Orientalists' geographies of civilisation, progress and degeneration. The claims of Germanic prominence in the Aryan narrative, for example, coupled with those of Latin/southern degeneration, led to an animated and controversial reception of Aryanism in Italy. Italian academic Orientalism, this time in a positivistic mode, was keen to discuss the genealogical links between Roman and Indian antiquity, and the centrality of Roman progress to Aryan historicity. Italian Indology was driven by the impulse to restore Classicism through the Aryan narrative in order to counter the rhetoric of Latin decadence. In order to achieve this effect, Indologists and Orientalists at large proposed a switch from classical to Orientalist or comparative philology, which still entailed a rejection of Semitism on the basis of the Aryan–Semitic divide.

Italian Orientalist philology, and consequently mythology and ethnology, especially in the figure of Pullè, developed the 'Aryan-Mediterranean' idea to elaborate a rhetoric of Aryanism which centred on Rome and its progressive and leading role in European-Aryan civilisation.[49] The Latins, a branch of the Italic peoples, were the Mediterranean branch of the Aryan family that had eventually unified the whole of Italy, Europe and the Mediterranean. In this

49 The rhetoric according to which the Aryans entered Italy from the north and went on to form the Aryan-Mediterranean branch of the Indo-European family is present, for instance, in the already-mentioned works by De Gubernatis (i.e. *Storia comparata degli usi nuziali in Italia e presso gli altri popoli indo-europei* (1873), *Mitologia comparata* (1880), *Storia comparata degli usi funebri in Italia e presso altri popoli indo-europei* (1873), *Roma e l'Oriente nella storia, nella leggenda e nella visione* (1899)), as well as in other works, such as *Vita e civiltà vedica (confrontate con la vita degli antichi romani)* (1906).

Orientalist rhetoric, though, the Italic branch of the Aryan family appeared to have entered Italy from the north.[50] Thus, prompted by their northern European counterparts, Italians reconfigured the history of Rome and gave it not only Indian roots but also northern European links. More broadly, the northernness of Italians or Romans (who, according to some, had reached Italy from India via the Germanic north) was used to detach Roman civilisation from Semitic civilisation. This separation was also supported philologically through the transition from classical philology – whereby Latin and Semitic civilisations were considered to be related – to comparative philology – whereby Latin civilisation was seen in the genealogical family tree of the Aryan family and therefore related to India and Greece on the one hand, and modern Europe on the other. From 1936 onwards, it is to this tradition of Aryanism and anti-Semitism that the fascists returned, after receiving a boost from Nazi Aryanism. The importance of these ideas lies in the fact that they were reworked in Italy in order to replace the claims of Latin degeneration with a rhetoric of Roman progress. Italian Orientalism's first step towards this goal was to reconcile classical philology with the new comparative philology while discussing the history of Indo-European civilisation through language.

Comparative philology replaces classical philology: Sanskrit replaces Hebrew as the European linguistic root

Italian Orientalists faced the challenge to have to convince Italian Classicists that even classical philology would benefit from the new discoveries of comparative philology. Classical philology had established the links between Hebrew, Egyptian and the European classical and modern languages, but comparative philology had demonstrated the obsoleteness of these findings

50 As Pullè explained, 'gli italici, una delle ramificazioni piú pure della famiglia Indo-Europea, penetrarono la valle del Po dai passi alpini orientali o centrali' [the Italic people, one of the purest ramifications of the Indo-European family, penetrated the Po Valley through either the central or the Oriental Alpine paths]. Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, 'Profilo antropologico d'Italia', in *Archivio per la antropologia e la etnologia*, 28 (1898), pp. 19–168 (45–6).

and had proposed the new Indo-European theory that saw Sanskrit, and not Hebrew, as the primary language. In this section, I am particularly interested in the way in which Sanskrit replaced Hebrew as the originary language of European languages in the rhetoric of Italian comparative philology.

Kerbaker was one of the first Orientalists to internalise the prejudices of European Orientalism and denounce the outdated approach of classical philology. In his *La filologia comparata e la filologia classica* (1875), he attacks those Classicists and Catholics who continued to resist comparative philology, and insists that it is for the benefit of classical philology that the classical languages should be taught by using the 'metodo nuovo, analitico, *germanico*' [new analytical Germanic method], based on the study of their inner organism. This method, for Kerbaker, should replace the 'metodo tradizionale sintetico, *italiano*' [Italian traditional method of synthesis], which addresses the aesthetics and practicality of idioms.[51] An example of the interation between classical and comparative philology is given by Luigi Valmaggi, Professor of Latin at Turin University, in his *Manuale storico-bibliografico di filologia classica* (1894). Valmaggi reconstructs the history of classical philology, emphasising the strong Italian tradition of the sixteenth century and how this tradition had established the belief 'che l'ebraica dovesse essere la madre di tutte le lingue' [that Hebrew was the mother of all languages].[52] He then deals with the impact of the science of linguistics, in the aftermath of which classical languages began to be seen as deriving from Sanskrit (and no longer from Hebrew), and as a phase in the evolution of the Aryan family of languages.[53] While recognising that philology and linguistics had proceeded along two different paths, Valmaggi asserts that collaboration between the two is still necessary for the study of Greek and Latin grammar.[54]

51 Michele Kerbaker, *La filologia comparata e la filologia classica* (Naples: Stamperia del Fibreno, 1875), pp. 4–5.

52 Luigi Valmaggi, *Manuale storico-bibliografico di filologia classica* (Turin-Palermo: Clausen, 1894), pp. 74–5.

53 Valmaggi, *Manuale storico-bibliografico*, p. 76.

54 Valmaggi, *Manuale storico-bibliografico*, p. 81.

According to Lignana, the Orientalist study of India represented the study of the first phase of Aryan civilisation, and as such it provided useful knowledge for the understanding of the origins of the two successive phases of Aryan civilisation: Greece and Rome. This was not the case with the older form of Orientalism that concerned Hebrew and Egyptian: although the old Semitic and Egyptian Orientalisms were often in dialogue with Classicism, they were not concerned with the genesis of classical antiquity. This was a novelty of the new Orientalism and comparative philology. Thus, if Sanskrit and Indian civilisation had not been discovered, Orientalism would have remained only partially relevant to Classicism and

> alla filologia orientale non competerebbe altro diritto, che, rivendicata la sua importanza, e consapevolezza, collocarsi come sistema indipendente accanto alla filologia classica. Ma se nell'orientalismo vi ha punto, che si colleghi colla genesi stessa del classicismo la cosa e' diversa.
>
> [Orientalist philology would have had no other right than vindicating its importance, and would have remained independent of classical philology. But if Orientalism is linked to the genesis of Classicism, then it is a different thing.][55]

Semitic and Egyptian philologies were independent of classical philology. However, with the advent of Aryan philology and its investigation of the genealogical process between the Aryan phases, comparative and classical philology came to function in tandem.

Thus, for Lignana, the new science of language would, by means of comparisons between the older and the younger Aryan languages, reconstruct the various stages of evolution, thus providing a new series of insights into the inner history of languages, civilisation and spirituality. What followed was the Aryanisation of classical antiquity, and especially of Roman antiquity, which consisted in determining the Indo-European roots of every aspect of classical civilisation through language. This meant that from the identification of stages of evolution within the Indo-European family of languages, one could trace and understand the dynamics of formation and

55 Lignana, *La filologia al secolo XIX* (Naples: Dekten & Rocholl, 1868), p. 52.

evolution of each Aryan language and the civilisation it carried with it. Classical antiquity was thus approached deterministically and considered in its evolution. Lignana compared the comparative grammar of Bopp to Darwin's theory and established parallels between them: 'Che cos'è questa grammatica di Bopp se non l'analogo della teoria di Darwin nelle sue applicazioni ai fatti della linguistica? L'esposizione è diversa, come sono diverse le due scienze. Ma le conclusioni sebbene non egualmente estese sono identiche' [What is Bopp's grammar if not a theory analogous to Darwin's theory in their applications to the facts of linguistics? The exposition is different, as the two sciences are different, but the conclusions are the same].[56]

However, Lignana, unlike Darwin, was a polygenist. He was adamant that Aryan and Semitic languages should not be thought to derive from a common source. He made this clear in his *La filologia al secolo XIX* (1868), in which he argued that, in spite of the physiological analogy between Egypt's languages, Semitism and the Aryan world, the question of genealogic unity remains problematic. Semitic languages, like the people who spoke them, were not as progressive as the Aryan languages; and this for him indicated their different origin. And if they did share the same origin, this should be located in an anti-historical period. In any case, whatever the solution to the genealogic problem of Aryan and Semitic types, the value and efficacy of comparative philology remains unaltered: 'la filologia ariana non avrà mai bisogno di abbandonare il concetto, e le proporzioni del suo sistema' [Aryan philology will never need to abandon the concept, and the proportion of its system].[57]

The widespread belief among Italian Orientalists was that comparative philology was more scientific than classical philology. Comparisons between ancient and modern languages were not new; what was new in comparative philology, as the philologist Giovanni Biasutti argued, was that these comparisons were not made for aesthetic purposes, but for scientific purposes – that

56 Giacomo Lignana, *Le transformazionei delle specie e le tre epoche delle lingue e letterature indo-europee. Discorso* (Rome: Loescher, 1871), p. 11.

57 Lignana, *La filologia al secolo XIX*, p. 66.

is, historical, ethnographical, archeological, etc.[58] From the comparative study of languages, philology classified the people that spoke them, thus providing data for ethnography, and creating links between languages, peoples and nations. This was something that classical philology could only do in a limited way. As Kerbaker puts it, 'sintantochè il ceppo greco-latino offriva il solo esempio di ciò che suol dirsi una lingua classica antica, era impossibile tracciare lo schema etnografico delle diverse lingue e nazioni' [as long as the Greek-Latin stock was the only example of a language of antiquity, it was impossible to trace the ethnographic scheme of different languages and nations].[59] The discovery of Sanskrit opened up a new world which not only mapped the historical pilgrimage of the Aryans, but also confirmed their status as world rulers and their civilising mission, through European imperialism. Thus Indology and Aryan philology mapped the path of the civilising race:

> quello che, ricongiungendo l'Oriente e l'occidente, tracciò il vero continente etnografico ... della grande razza incivilitrice, distesa secondo il corso del sole dal Gange all'Atlantico, destinata manifestamente dalla legge storica a signoreggiare il mondo coll'opere della mano e del pensiero.
>
> [that which, by re-joining the Orient with the West, traced the real ethnographic continent ... of the great civilising race, spanning from the river Ganges to the Atlantic ocean, and destined to rule the world in thought and action.][60]

Comparative philology was considered to be able to reach depths unknown to classical philology in terms of both time and space. Moreover, the Aryan language and race were depicted hierarchically by clearly establishing races of rulers and races of ruled peoples, paving the way to colonial discourse and European imperialism's rhetoric of the civilising mission.

The replacement of Hebrew by Sanskrit, as well as the genealogical relationship between Aryan languages and the evolutionary theory that

58 Giovanni Biasutti, *Della filologia comparata e delle sue relazioni con lo studio delle lingue, coll'archeologia, coll'etnologia, colla storia e colla filosofia* (Venice: Naratovish, 1865), pp. 11–12.

59 Kerbaker, *La filologia comparata*, p. 28.

60 Kerbaker, *La filologia comparata*, p. 29.

shaped their transformations, gave way to the study of grammar from a historicist perspective. This method of Aryan historicity was believed to throw new light on the understanding of the linguistic transformation of pre-Roman times that had a considerable impact on the development of the Italian dialects. Domenico Pezzi, for instance, in his *Grammatica latina storico-comparativa*, the first Latin grammar based on Bopp's comparative grammar, explains that Aryan philology had re-mapped the pre-Roman history of the

> linguaggio dello stipite degli'Itali Latini, il quale coi dialetti degli Umbri, dei Volsci, dei Sabini, degli Osci costituisce la famiglia delle lingue italiche anche propriamente dette, che insieme colla famiglia cognata delle lingue celtiche, slave, lituane, germaniche, indiane ed iraniche, è madre l'antichissima favella indo-europea, o meglio, Aria.
>
> [language of the Italo-Latin stock, along with the dialects of Umbrians, Volscis, Sabines, Osci, constitutes the family of Italic languages proper, and its sister family of Celtic, Slavonic, Lithuanian, Germanic, Iraqi and Indian languages, are all children of the oldest Indo-European, or better, Aryan language.][61]

Pezzi goes on to describe the course of the evolution of the Aryan languages from Latin to neo-Latin languages, which he divides into four main periods:

> il primo è rappresentato dal latino nell'unità aria, il secondo dal latino nell'unità italo-greca o pelasgica, il terzo del latino propriamente detto, il quarto finalmente dal latino trasformato negli idiomi neo-latini.
>
> [the first is represented by the Latin in the Aryan unity, the second by the Latin in the Italo-Greek or Pelasgic unity, the third by Latin proper, the fourth, at last, by the Latin transformed into the neo-Latin [like Italian] languages.][62]

What emerges from Pezzi's and the other Orientalists' rhetoric is not only the idea of Latin evolution, but also a rehabilitation of classical antiquity, and in particular a rehabilitation of Latin and Rome, within the Indo-European concept. Interestingly, the replacement of Hebrew by Sanskrit

61 Domenico Pezzi, *Grammatica storico-comparativa della lingua latina* (Rome: Loescher, 1872), p. 1.

62 Pezzi, *Grammatica storico-comparativa*, p. 15.

in Italian Orientalist philology revitalised the role of classical antiquity by giving it a new scientific relevance, with particular emphasis on positivist notions of evolution and modern progress.

Even Classicists of the calibre of Gaetano Trezza, Professor of Latin at the *Istituto di Studi Superiori*, confirmed the advantages of the the new scientific method introduced by Orientalism. In his *Studi critici* (1878), he acknowledged that it was not very popular among many Classicists, partly because of the long tradition of Classicism in Italy, but also because it was considered too Germanic and therefore hostile.[63] But Trezza insisted that the new method should be appreciated because of its emphasis on the historical formations of language, and because it removed metaphysics from the comparative analysis of grammatical forms. The new philologist, Trezza continues, reveals the layers of language like the naturalist reveals those of the soil as the evolution of vocabulary illustrates a living system.[64] It is impossible to understand Latin, for instance, unless we know its historical origins, its relation to other Italic languages and 'per quali rispetti si congiunga al fondo aryo e per quale se ne stacchi' [in what respects it is connected to the Aryan root and in what respects it is detached].[65] For Trezza, however, Latin grammar is still studied in an unscientific way, even in Germany, and thus, in his opinion, there is a need for an equivalent of Curtius' Greek grammar for Latin. The true joy for a philologist, Trezza claims with reference to Müller, is finding, in a philological root, a vestige marked by human history, in the same way the geologist finds in a fossil the traces of lost flora or fauna.[66] This is particularly important for Latin because it developed between two important historical periods – ancient Greece and the Italian Renaissance – and inevitably, it bore traces of both Greek and Italian, in linguistic and literary terms. Latin literature, for Trezza, contains the old and the new world, and it contains a higher ideal than Greek literature, which is quite clear in the work of Lucretius, Tacitus, Virgil and Seneca: for these authors, literature is no longer 'l'evangelo della

63 Gaetano Trezza, *Studi critici* (Verona and Padua: Drucker & Tedeschi, 1878), p. 236.
64 Trezza, *Studi critici*, pp. 238–9.
65 Trezza, *Studi critici*, p. 239.
66 Trezza, *Studi critici*, p. 242.

bellezza' [the Gospel of beauty], as it was in Greek literature; a new, higher ideal inspired them, the 'stato psicologico' [the psychological state].[67]

From comparative philology to comparative mythology: The Aryan Vedas replace the Semitic Bible

The same scientific relevance accorded to comparative philology was given to the comparative assessments of mythology. The result was an obsession with and fetishisation of the Vedas and a reconsideration of the Bible in light of Aryan historicity. As for philology, Hindu, Greek and Latin mythologies, but also the Bible, were compared in service of the scientific study of Aryan religion. De Gubernatis was undoubtedly the main commentator on Aryan mythology. He was a monogenist who believed that the Aryans and the Semites, although initially united, eventually separated. He associated the Aryans with Vedic, Greek, and Roman mythology, as well as Christianity, and he associated the Semites with the Old Testament. While perpetuating the attempt to de-Judaise Christianity, De Gubernatis explains the significance of the *Vedic Hymns* as the new Aryan 'Bible' for Aryan-Italians:

> i semiti leggono, meditano e quasi adorano la bibbia; ... la nostra bibbia, il nostro antico memoriale di famiglia, il primo libro in cui i nostri avi hanno letto, sono gli inni che chiamarono *vedici* ... cantati o recitati insieme sotto un medesimo cielo dalle varie tribù che componevano la razza ariana.
>
> [the Semites read, meditate and almost worship the bible; ... our bible, our ancient family memorial, the first book which our ancestors read, is the book of Vedic hymns ... sung or recited together, under the same sky, by the various tribes that constituted the Aryan race.][68]

The Vedas thus became the root of comparative mythology in the same way as Sanskrit had become the root of comparative philology. Philological

67 Trezza, *Studi critici*, p. 243.

68 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Fonti vediche dell'epopea illustrata* (Florence: Fodratti, 1867), p. 5.

evidence was thus used to create Indo-European religious lineages as comparative philology became a model for comparative mythology. De Gubernatis spells out the process of transformation of myths from language to language, but also nation to nation in Aryan civilisation:

> il mito indo-europeo, nel viaggiare di paese in paese, può trasformarsi come il linguaggio indo-europeo e vestir nuove fogge, fantastiche, nazionali, ma non certamente più del linguaggio .... Perciò è possibile la mitologia comparata come la filologia comparata.
>
> [the Indo-European myth, like Indo-European languages, by travelling from nation to nation, can transform itself and take on specific national shapes, but certainly no more than language. Therefore comparative mythology, like comparative philology, is possible.][69]

In *orientalistica*, the idea of Latin degeneration is challenged and subverted by placing Roman myths at the heart of Aryan evolutionary mythology and as the progressive element linking paganism and Christianity. While the myths of India represent the earliest state (the infant state of the human mind), Greek and Roman myths are more mature phases. De Gubernatis goes so far as to see political intent in Roman mythology, as opposed to the child-like state of wonder of Hindu myths. According to him, the Romans, who busied themselves more with earthly than heavenly matters, saw in Jupiter the 'assolutezza del comando' [absoluteness of command], the ideal type for their 'ambiziosi intendimenti politici' [ambitious political aims]. On the other hand, the Indo-Aryan who wrote the Vedic hymns 'non era preoccupato nè dell'arte nè della politica' [was not concerned with either art or politics]; he was imaginative like a child who 'vedeva ... d'appertutto oggetti di meraviglia' [saw ... everywhere objects of wonder].[70]

De Gubernatis' rhetoric of Roman progress builds on the already-established notion of *Romanità* in the 'third Italy'. During the Risorgimento, Italian nationalists such as Giuseppe Mazzini had associated the idea of national unification with that of a Roman 'rebirth'. In Mazzini's Comtian

69 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Mitologia comparata* (Milan: Hoepli, 1880), p. 4.
70 De Gubernatis, *Fonti vediche dell'epopea*, p. 11.

'religion of humanity', the notion of a 'third' Rome as the historical and political centre of the Italian nation and as the heir of imperial and papal Rome is imbued with notions of universalism, Romanisation and unification. In post-unification Italy, Orientalists, and De Gubernatis in particular, were influenced by this rhetoric and reconstructed the history of Aryan Italy by means of a succession of declines and rebirths of Rome. The modernity of the third Aryan Rome of united Italy was defined by parallels made between contemporary India and the first Aryan Rome.[71] The evolution and progress of Rome was reconstructed through the Hindu myths and customs which had evolved from Vedic to Roman paganism and then to Christianity and folklore.[72] In *Roma e l'Oriente* (1899), for instance, De Gubernatis sets out to demonstrate 'la certa consanguineità, parentela, continuità, ... oserei dire identità della gente romana con la gente vedica' [the certain consanguinity, relationship, continuity, ... I would dare say identity of the Roman people with the Vedic people].[73] The elements De Gubernatis considered to reach this conclusion, particularly in reference to Roman and Italian modern progress, were Aryan myths and cults. De Gubernatis provides several examples of these myths and cults, and it is worth mentioning one such example, which refers to ancient Roman cults absorbed by Christianity and contemporary Italian Catholic customs; Aryan myths and cults that were still visible in the contemporary 'antiquity' of early twentieth-century India:

> ... una tale tradizione latina ha suo speciale riscontro negli usi tradizionali indiani, dove, non solo l'idoletto domestico conserva il suo piccolo santuario, ma si compiono ancora presso le famiglie arie, riti sacrificali quotidiani in onore dei Penati, e le stesse stoviglie della cucina sono oggetto di culto, e circondate di venerazione superstiziosa.
>
> [... such a Latin tradition finds its equivalent in traditional Indian customs, where, not only does the small domestic idol preserve its sanctuary, but Aryan families still

71 De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane. India Centrale*, ii, pp. 6–7, 21–2.

72 See Angelo De Gubernatis, *Roma e l'Oriente nella storia, nella leggenda e nella visione* (Rome: Alighieri, 1899), *Fonti vediche dell'epopea* and *Storia popolare degli usi funebri indo-europei* (Milan: Treves, 1873).

73 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Roma e l'Oriente*, p. 216.

> carry out sacrificial rites to honour the Penates, and the same kitchen crockery is a cult object, and is surrounded by superstitious veneration.][74]

As well as the link between comparative philology and mythology, De Gubernatis created a link between the human and natural sciences. As Renan and Müller first argued, Vedic mythology is the echo of nature, and De Gubernatis, in a positivist mode, made a parallel between the ancient writer of myths, and the modern European-Italian scientist, who contemplates the sky with a telescope and would never create myths. De Gubernatis' play between Indomania and Indophobia for the purposes of Italian Aryan historicity eventually results in the claim that mythology is the poetry of moved, amazed and frightened ignorant people: 'Bisogna essere creduli, paurosi, ingenui, ignari come fanciulli per trovar tante occasioni di meraviglia e di terrore nel cielo' [One needs to be credulous, fearful, naïve and unaware, like children, in order to find so many occasions for wonder and terror in the sky].[75] India is in this way both celebrated for providing the Vedic origins of the Aryan family, but also questioned for not making the same progress as the Aryan-Roman people, for instance. This oscillation between an Indomania with regard to the times of origins, and an Indophobia with regard to modern Indian stagnation characterises the rhetoric of a good deal of Italian Indological studies of this time, as well as the dynamics of the literary representations of India.

Of all the Vedic hymns, De Gubernatis commented in particular on the hymn to the dawn, which Orientalists regarded as the earliest and greatest example of how mythology is the echo of nature. The hymn to the dawn was idealised as the ultimate myth of creation from which all else derived and, as we will see in Chapter 6, the poet Giosuè Carducci used it for his homage to the reborn Italy. Interestingly, in his *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (1874), De Gubernatis provided a personal account of the natural spectacle that may have inspired the composition of the hymn of the dawn, as he explains his impressions of when he found himself in the plateaux of Central Asia – the same plateaux that make us think of Leopardi's

74 De Gubernatis, *Roma e l'Oriente*, p. 47.
75 De Gubernatis, *Mitologia comparata*, p. 5.

'Canto notturno', and to which Carducci refers in his poem 'All'Aurora'. De Gubernatis explains how he himself was able to contemplate the magnificence of this spectacle on the alpine peaks, and from the impact they had on him, he was able to understand 'la ragione che fece sugli altipiani dell'Asia centrale inneggiare con tanto ingenuo calore i primi pastori e guerrieri ariani' [the reason why the early Aryan shepherds and warriors extolled the plateaux of Central Asia]. Even more interestingly, borrowing from Renan and Müller, De Gubernatis spells out why the hymn to the dawn is the echo of nature: 'sono l'espressione più fedele dei sentimenti che la natura ha svegliato nel petto dei nostri più remoti e più immaginosi fratelli asiatici' [they are the most faithful expression of the feelings that nature awoke in the soul of our more remote and more imaginative Asiatic brothers].[76] In this way, De Guberntis brings together ethnology, mythology, history and geology by validating the Vedic hymn to the dawn through his own personal experience of India and its nature in an ethnographical mode. Influenced by Müller, De Gubernatis went on to claim that the feelings that nature – and especially the dawn – arouse in humans, as described in the Vedic hymns, are not only the greatest representation of the Aryan sentiment, but even more often, they are the 'espressione del sentimento universale che occupa l'uomo innanzi alla pompa del cielo mattutino e vespertino' [expression of the universal feeling that humans have when witnessing the morning and evening sky].[77] The Vedic hymns, as the echo of nature, acquire the symbolic value of European-Aryan universalism, but they can also be read scientifically as the naturalistically based explanations of the divine, as the next chapter will make clear, in the 'science of religion' and 'the science of race'.

76 Angelo De Gubernatis, *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1874), p. 56.

77 De Gubernatis, *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica*, p. 56.

CHAPTER 5

Race, Religion and Colonialism in Italian Orientalism and Anthropology: From the Indo-European to the Eurafrican

Modern European Orientalism, as a result of Indology's quest for origins, created alternatives to biblical and Judeo-Christian narratives. However, in the country of the Pope, the Aryan alternative immediately constituted a challenge to Catholicism (and not only to classical philology). De Gubernatis' work constituted the first Italian attempt to reconstruct the divine history of Europe, and Italy within it, by replacing the Bible with the Vedas. Aryan historicity was not only employed to give Vedic roots to Christianity and classical antiquity, but also to secularise Italy and counter the dogmas and power of the Catholic Church by approaching religion scientifically. In this chapter, I aim to illustrate how Aryanism remained a controversial question in Italy. Firstly, I deal with the way in which some Orientalists such as De Gubernatis were criticised by the Church for his work on comparative mythology, while others such as Carlo Puini, as well as Classicists such as Trezza, employed Aryan narratives to criticise Catholicism. Secondly, I look at how De Gubernatis developed a specifically Italian religious and racial Aryanism, while others, like Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, dismissed the links between language and race established by De Gubernatis and other Orientalists like Lignana and Kerbaker. I pay particular attention to how Ascoli, influenced by Carlo Cattaneo and his unique form of philosophical historicism, criticised the Aryan–Semitic divide and proved influential on anthropologists such as Cesare Lombroso who, in turn, conceived an Aryanism which was inclusive of Jews but not of Muslims. Thirdly, I investigate the way in which other anthopologists like Giuseppe Sergi, influenced by Lombroso, went a step further and challenged Indo-Europeism, by elaborating a contrasting theory of Eurafricanism, or Mediterraneanism, which proved influential on a new body of Orientalist scholarship, including colonial Orientalism.

From the 'science of language' to the 'science of religion': Aryanism versus Catholicism

The coining of an Italian 'science of religion', for the first time in Italian culture, helped revive the study of religion from a historical perspective, with the aid of the new positivist method. However, this challenge to the biblical narrative in Italy triggered Catholic resistance, especially in the person of the abbot Cesare De Cara, who wrote at length about De Gubernatis' mistakes and 'blasphemies', and about the danger of Orientalist philology. I am interested in the debates and perspectives triggered by the new science of religion, with an emphasis on how it ultimately aimed to contribute to the secularisation and modernisation of unified Italy.

Cesare De Cara: Angelo De Gubernatis and Blasphemous Orientalism

Cesare De Cara was an abbot of the Society of Jesus, a congregation of the Catholic Church, from 1851 onwards. He had studied literature and philosophy at the university of Naples and had gone on to study theology in Belgium and France. He became one of the contributors to the Catholic journal *Civiltà Cattolica*, wrote books on philology and archaeology in relation to Egypt and Italy – such as *Hyksos o re pastori d'Egitto* (1889) and *Hethei Pelasgi* (1894) – and was part of the Judeo-Christian tradition that saw Christianity as related to Egypt, Hebraism and classical antiquity rather than India. De Cara's reactions to De Gubernatis are collected in a volume which is entirely dedicated to correcting, as the title itself suggests, the Orientalist's 'errori mitologici' [mythological mistakes].[1] De Cara's attack is particularly directed at 'la linguistica e la filologia' [linguistics and philology], as the abbot sets himself the task of demonstrating how they 'siano da sole incompetenti ed inette a spiegare le antiche credenze dei popoli e singolarmente le giudaico

1 Cesare De Cara, *Errori mitologici del Professor A. De Gubernatis: saggio critico* (Prato: Giacchetti, 1883).

cristiane' [are alone incompetent and inept for explaining the ancient beliefs of peoples and more specifically of the Judeo-Christians].[2] De Gubernatis is accused of competing with Renan, even though 'gli fallì l'impresa' [he failed at this enterprise], as his 'chiaroscuro religiosi' [religious contradictions] betray a total lack of respect towards Christianity. Moreover, De Gubernatis is also guilty of being so superstitious that his arguments run the risk of being laughable even for non-religious or atheist readers.

Given De Gubernatis' reconstruction of Christianity through Vedism, the Indologist is held responsible for undermining the veracity of all the dogmas on which the Church founded itself. De Gubernatis, like Renan and Müller, aimed to consider religion from a secular point of view as a historical but imaginative phenomenon. This is the greatest threat of De Gubernatis' work on comparative mythology, and indeed, in a positivist mode, this is exactly what De Gubernatis aimed to achieve. De Gubernatis accused Christianity and Catholicism of being superstitious and allegorical, and De Cara went on to make the same accusations regarding De Gubernatis' work. According to De Cara, De Gubernatis

> si contenta di spargere ... in tutti i suoi lavori di mitologia, principi, massime, insinuazioni e bestemmie ora sopra uno, ora sopra un altro domma cattolico; si tenne pago di asserire che le credenze cristiane, i riti e le cerimonie della Chiesa sono miti pagani, favole recate a un più alto e morale significato; ... che Gesù Cristo è un mito, e la religione da lui fondata è un'allegoria morale che poggia sopra la mitologia ellenico-orientale.
>
> [is happy to spread, ... in all his works about mythology, principles, maxims, insinuations and blasphemies now on one and now on another Catholic dogma; he was happy to claim that Christian beliefs, the Church's rites and ceremonies are pagan myths, fables aiming at a higher and more moral meaning; ... [and] that Jesus Christ is a myth and the religion founded by him a moral allegory that built on Hellenic-Oriental mythology.][3]

De Gubernatis is blamed for borrowing from too many sources and systems, creating a great deal of confusion, and torturing myths so they could

2 De Cara, *Errori mitologici*, p. 6.
3 De Cara, *Errori mitologici*, p. 10.

take on the meaning he wanted them to have. Linguistics and philology, the new humanistic sciences of the nineteenth century, take central stage in De Cara's attack on professional Orientalism, but they are not the only aspects of Orientalism he attacks. Together with De Gubernatis' erroneous etymological system, De Cara accuses De Gubernatis of resorting to the systems of other scientific fields which he thinks are useful for his aim, ranging from the 'solare' [solar] to the 'meteorologico' [meteorological] and 'astronomico' [astronomical], but also of twisting 'novelline popolari' [popular tales] and 'proverbi mitici' [mythical proverbs], and of turning upside down 'dizionari di antichità cristiane' ... che egli stravolge a significazioni mitiche' [dictionaries of Christian antiquities ... which he upsets and turns into mythical meanings].[4] De Gubernatis is thus depicted as obsessed with and blinded by mythology, Indology and the positivist method which allowed him to make the historical reconstructions:

> Nella mitologia antica come nel Folklore o tradizioni o novelline popolari, egli dunque non vede che miti vedici ... e quel che pare incredibile, ne fatti e personaggi biblici scorge gli stessi miti di aurora e di tempesta, di sole e di luna, e simili puerilità che moverebbero a riso se non fossero blasfeme.
>
> [In ancient mythology, as in folk and popular tales, he sees only Vedic myths ... and what seems incredible is that he finds the same myths of dawn and storm, sun and moon, and similar puerilities, which would make one laugh were they not blasphemous.][5]

If the Church through De Cara attempted to dismiss Orientalism in order to defend its dogmas, Italian Orientalists gathered strength from the Church's and De Cara's attacks to carry on with their secularising mission with renewed strength and vigour. Curiously, Orientalism was not only addressed as a tool that could be used to lift Italy out of stagnation, but also as providing a genuinely emancipatory and modernising mode of producing knowledge, the very freedom Foucault attributed to philology.

4 De Cara, *Errori mitologici*, p. 42–3.
5 De Cara, *Errori mitologici*, p. 46.

Nevertheless, such knowledge production showed a process of hierarchisation of faith which paralleled that of race.

Carlo Puini, the history of religion and scientific analysis

At the opposite end of the spectrum to De Cara are all those Orientalists who, after De Gubernatis' promotion and diffusion of Renan and Müller's work, engaged with and developed an Italian dimension of the science of religion. The most significant book to have emerged from this group is Puini's *Saggi di storia della religione* (1882). It is interesting to note that the title of the work contains the singular form of the word *religione* (religion), which is here considered a single historical phenomenon, common to all humanity. Strikingly, in spite of the discriminatory nature of Puini's claims against certain religions such as Islam, his aim in this text is to emancipate Italy, Italian culture and society from Catholic dogmas. In his preface, Puini stresses how the new approach to religion differs from the traditional Theological Faculties, which 'non avevano intendimento scientifico indipendente' [did not have an independent scientific aim]. These Theological Faculties followed certain doctrines *a priori*, without the freedom to examine them, as they were 'al servizio della Chiesa, o delle Chiese dominanti' [at the service of the Church, or the dominant Churches].[6] For Puini, one of the developments of the modern age is being able to approach religion from a historical point of view, with the new method pioneered by positivism, thus moving beyond theology and approaching the science of religion as a natural evolution of theology.[7]

Inevitably, the new approach would follow the classifications proposed by the pioneer of the science of religion, Max Müller. Puini, in presenting Müller's thought, focuses on the Aryan–Semitic divide and explains it by means of language, but concludes that the main difference between Aryans and Semites lies in the function played by the entity of God. The Semitic God, for instance, cultivates the cult of the God in history, that is,

6 Carlo Puini, *Saggi di storia della religione* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1882), p. iii.

7 Puini, *Saggi*, p. viii.

of God as 'reggitore dei destini di persone individue, di stirpi, di nazioni' [beholder of the destinies of individuals, races and nations]. The Aryan God, on the other hand, cultivates the cult of the God in nature, that is, 'di Dio siccome dominante le forze della natura' [of God as ruling the forces of nature].[8] The Semitic notion of God as the beholder of the destinies of peoples and nations centres on questions of politics, and is far more limited in matters of metaphysics. Aryan religions are superior as they are concerned with the observation of phenomena, an 'empirical' attitude that led to the emergence of natural history and the concept of evolution. Puini thus elucidates that the theory of evolution is the methodological starting point of the history of religion. The history of a people, the attitudes stemming from their ethnicities, as well as the influences of the outside world, are all factors that determine either the progress or degeneration of their religion.[9] For Puini, history had shown that the progress of religion could only be observed within Aryan religions, while Semitic religions showed signs of modern degeneration.

Thus Puini sets himself the task of proving that Italian religion, that is, Christianity, is an Aryan religion, and therefore evolutionary, like the Italian language and race. Like Renan, Puini makes it clear that Christianity is not a Semitic heritage, but a Vedic and therefore an Aryan heritage. Firstly, Puini establishes that the idea of supreme being in Christianity enunciates 'un fatto filologico e storico; non un dogma di fede' [a philological and a historical fact; not a dogma of faith]. Puini focuses on the philological dimension of the word 'God' to show the historicity and evolution of the term and concept. He argues that the word 'Dio' [God], via 'Deus, Theos, Zeus, Dyaus' does not lead us to the 'antica società ebrea, nè fra deità semitiche' [ancient Jewish society, nor to Semitic deities], but to the 'culla comune delle varie civiltà europee; ci conduce tra gli Arii primitivi, innanzi al tempo della loro separazione' [the common cradle of the various European civilisations; it leads us among the primitive Aryans, before the time of their separation].[10]

8 Puini, *Saggi*, p. 21–2.
9 Puini, *Saggi*, p. 22–3.
10 Puini, *Saggi*, p. 141.

Christianity, on the other hand, although originally Aryan, is seen by Puini as becoming Semitic, or at least, as having something related to the Semitic Bible for a period of time (though in essence still Aryan). Puini even quotes Renan's passage in which Renan explains his understanding of how the most important event in human history is the revolution that occurred when the noblest part of humankind (the Aryans) switched from paganism to monotheism, which is when, most likely, the Aryans and the Semites became two races.[11]

Puini's reference to Renan, however, is more relevant in the context of his discussion of how the modern age has seen the survival of just three religions – Christianisty, Islam and Buddhism – two of which only can be considered truly universal, Christianity and Buddhism. Buddhism and Christianity have many parallels as they both have a founder, a doctrine and an assembly of the faithful: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, in the case of Buddhism, and Jesus, the Gospel and the Church, in the case of Christianity.[12] Buddhism and Christianity are thus said to be the religions that predominate in humanity; those that represent the faith of all civilised nations. On the other hand, Islam, the third of the universalist religions, has found zealous disciples only 'tra' popoli appena innanzi alla cultura, o al tutto barbari' [among barely civilised or entirely barbarous peoples]. In Persia and India, where it is professed by more civilised peoples, Islam 'trionfò con la forza' [triumphed through force].[13] Puini envisions that only Christianity and Buddhism, through Aryan evolution, could give way to a new religion of the future, which would be understood in a scientific and spiritual way; unless the new times, instead of a new religion, would bring about the end of religious institutions which have hitherto been at the heart of human societies.[14] This mention about religious institution hints at the potential of the new science of religion to bring about the end of religious institutions such as the Roman Church. In actual fact, the new science of religion in Italy did aim to look at the

11 Puini, *Saggi*, p. 337.
12 Puini, *Saggi*, pp. 344–5.
13 Puini, *Saggi*, pp. 356–7.
14 Puini, *Saggi*, p. 358.

Roman Catholic Church from a new scientific angle, as the creator of man-made dogmas that had hindered rather than supported the evolution of Italian society. Puini, however, does not go into such details. It is Trezza, another major figure of the positivist school, who took a more vocal approach against Catholicism.

Gaetano Trezza: Nationalism, Classicist Aryanism and anti-Catholicism

Trezza discussed at length the findings of professional Orientalism, the science of religion and positivism, and examined their impact on Classicism, as well as Christianity and Catholicism. He authored works that proved influential in positivist circles and that include *Epicuro e l'epicureismo* (1877), *Studi critici* (1878), *Critica moderna* (1880), *La nuova critica moderna* (1881) and *Le religioni e la religione* (1884). In this section, I focus in particular on *Studi critici* and *Le religioni e la religione* as the two most significant texts where he developed a nationalist, anti-Catholic and Classicist rhetoric of Aryanism.

In *Studi critici*, for instance, Trezza addresses the main ideas and themes of Orientalism, but he does so as a Classicist. While recognising the merits of Indian civilisation, he deems Greek civilisation, and not even Roman civilisation, to be the greatest of all. Trezza's work, too, is based on the work of Renan and Müller, but he also makes references to Hegel's philosophy of history and lectures on aesthetics, and their (Eurocentric) interpretations of the history of civilisation. As Trezza reconstructs the Aryan path to civilisation, poetry and science, he claims that the turning point in this evolution occurs with Greece and the way in which Greek mythology for the first time gave divinities a human form. Though the foundation of this evolution is provided by the Vedas, Vedic mythology provides only 'un'ombra di Dio, dove l'umano sfuma e si perde nella vacua infinità del divino' [a shadow of God, where the human form fades away and is lost in the infinite vacuity of divinity]. Vedic shapes remain thus a 'fantastico abbozzo di metafisica, espresso con tutti gli ardiri della lirica orientale' [fantastic sketch of metaphysics, which is expressed with all the boldness of

Oriental lyricism].[15] Trezza makes particular reference to Hegel's phenomenology of the Spirit in order to explain how 'la Grecia gettò, per modo di dire, nella pienezza d'una forma umana le bozze irregolari del mito' [Greece threw, as it were, in the fullness of the human form (anthropomorphism), the irregular sketches of shapes]. In so doing, Greek mythology brought out 'l'individuo dal fondo panteistico in cui lo impediva l'Oriente' [the individual emerged from the pantheistic foundation, which is something that could not happen in the Orient]. It is this evolution that enabled 'la libertà dell'arte' [the freedom of art].[16] Inevitably, Oriental despotism is held responsible for the lack of human forms in Indian and Oriental mythology, whereas Greek and Western conceptions of freedom are seen as central in the anthropomorphism inaugurated by Greek antiquity: this anthropomorphism is considered the key moment in Aryan historicity and signals the beginning of the Western part of Indo-European civilisation. The Indian irregular sketches of shapes, on the other hand, gave way to the idea of the grotesque in Indian art and is another sign of Hegel's and Orientalism's Eurocentric hierarchisation of artistic expressions. Hegel, in fact, attributes the development of consciousness towards self-realisation to geographical areas. As Nicholas Germana explains,

> like so many of his contemporaries, Hegel saw ancient Greece as a Golden Age – the first home of philosophy and true beauty in art. Time and again in his lectures on fine arts Hegel drew distinctions between the sensual (and hypersexual) art of India and the beautiful masculine vitality of the Greeks. The representations of Greek gods are the perfect symbols of the 'religion of beauty' – an express recognition of the divinity of man. In contrast, grotesque Indian deities betray the 'murky confusion' of Spirit in the Orient, in a world that could not recognise the true dignity of human freedom in its art or religion.[17]

If consciousness amounts to murky confusion in the Orient, as Indian mythology shows, it is in Greece and with anthropomorphism that art

15 Trezza, *Studi Critici*, p. 32.

16 Trezza, *Studi critici*, p. 34.

17 Nicholas Germana, *The Anxiety of Autonomy and the Aesthetics of German Orientalism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017), p. 17.

comes to embody thought and beauty, and the divine in Man, which is a step towards freedom and absolute knowledge. Trezza, still building on Hegel, calls the moment when the Greeks introduced the personification of natural forces in mythology a 'revolution' and one of the greatest moments in history. It is a crucial moment in aesthetic eurythmics for it is when the human and the divine are joined in the 'ideal'. For Trezza, Greek mythology, as illustrated by the *Iliad*, is the greatest artistic creation inspired by religious feeling. The relationship between myth and thought is not as incoherent as in the *Ramayana*, or as disconnected as in the *Aeneid*, Trezza claims, but harmonised in the living unity whereby the reflection is not detached from the imagination: 'il pensiero era ancora mitologico e non scientifico nè scettico' [thought was still mythological and neither scientific nor sceptical]. In conclusion, from the mythological foundation of the *Iliad* 'si drizzano gli *individui divini*' [*divine individuals* emerge] and 'la leggenda si ammoglia alla storia negli *Eroi*' [the legend is wedded with the history of the *Heroes*]. No other 'schiatta … meglio della greca' [race … better than the Greeks] had 'la speciale attitudine degli arya di convertire i miti in rivelazioni dell'anima' [the special attitude of the Aryans [which led them] to convert myths into revelations of the soul], even if it was the Vedas that started this process.[18] Along with the celebration of the moment of divine humanisation and personification as the key moment in the development of aesthetics, attention is also turned to the question of eurythmics in order to point to Oriental disproportion and classical proportion, which would then be linked to binaries such as Orientalism (and Romanticism) and Classicism, irrationality and rationality, the grotesque and the beautiful, barbarism and civilisation. Classical anthropomorphism and the humanisation of phenomena had already been at the heart of the Classicist-Romantic quarrel between Leopardi and Di Breme, as already seen in Chapters 2 and 3, but it is important to stress that the notion classical anthropomorphism also marks a revolutionary moment in Indo-European genealogy, in the Eurocentric narrative of Aryanism, and this will also be seen in Chapter 6 with Giosuè Carducci's poem 'All'Aurora'.

18 Trezza, *Studi critici*, p. 35–7.

The work that sums up Trezza's views on the science of religion, *Le religioni*, praises the advent of the new science as a great event in the secularisation of Italian culture and thought. In this work, Trezza argues that all the deities, dogmas, pontiffs, Churches, revelations and miracles are merely historical phenomena. In the new science of religion, nothing is supernatural. Religions are the object of study through reconstructions of historical formations associated with the revelations of God. Trezza's views, however, have also their own Italian idiosyncracies as he intends to challenge the grip that the Catholic Church exerts on the newly constituted Italian nation. He claims that, with the Catholic dogma, 'si riaddormenta un popolo appena risorto dal servaggio politico' [one puts to sleep a people that has just emerged from political servitude].[19] He praises the work of Italian 'colleghi ed orientalisti egregi' [illustrious Orientalists and colleagues], who published 'alcuni studi eccellenti sulle religioni' [some excellent studies on religions], and mentions Puini's *Saggi*, Kerbaker's *Scienza della religione* and the work of David Castelli on Judaism and Christianity, *Il messia* and *La profezia nella Bibbia*.[20] In particular, Trezza praises Puini for being one of the few in Italy who could, like himself, become a chair of Comparative Religions. Trezza thinks that soon there would be such a chair, as there are enough erudite scholars like Puini who are 'liberi da pregiudizi teologi' [free from theological prejudice].[21]

Trezza's point of view is related to debates between liberal and conservative attitudes and approaches to the Roman Catholic Church. He maintains that if the liberals do not do enough to put forward a more secular approach in all aspects of life and society, the conservatives simply parrot the language used by the Pope and perpetuate Italian stagnation and political servitude. Trezza thus virulently attacks the claims of the Pope that Catholicism 'è una religione civile, creatrice di libertà, propagatrice di scienza' [that Catholicism is a civil religion, creator of freedom, propagator of

19 Gaetano Trezza, *Le religioni e la religione* (Verona and Padua: Drucker e Tedeschi, 1884), pp. xiii–xiv.

20 Trezza, *Le religioni*, pp. xi.

21 Trezza, *Le religioni*, pp. xi–xii, note 1.

science]. More importantly, he condemns the Pope's assertion 'che le nazioni moderne le ha proprio educate lui e che l'Italia venne sul bel bello sotto la sua mano paternamente pia' [that the modern nations have been educated by him, and that Italy flourished under his paternally pious hand].[22] Trezza stresses that the name of the Pope should be 'Legion', because he embodies the antithesis of freedom and is willing to fight with arms and repress any Italian attempt to achieve true freedom in self-government. According to Trezza, the Pope is 'il più grande nemico dell'Italia risorta' [the biggest enemy of reborn Italy].[23]

The science of religion also created support for the process of identity construction through the relationship between language, ethnicity and religion. Trezza creates hierarchies among religious identities, even though he insists on the falsity of all religions. Interestingly, Islam is said to be 'l'ultima delle religioni' [the last of religions], whereas Brahmanism and Buddhism are 'le due religioni più grandi e più originali che ci mostri la storia' [the two greatest and most original religions that history has shown us].[24] Ultimately, and understandably, since he is primarily attacking the Catholic Church here, Christianity is not the greatest of religions, as it shows the interdependence of religions, especially as the Semitic and Aryan elements found themselves together in it, partly overlaid and partly assimilated, but without achieving the originality of the more Aryan Greek, Brahmanic or Buddhist religions.[25] The dialogue/conflict between Aryans and Semites remains the cardinal point of the system of thought developed by Trezza's science of religion, which provides yet another example of polygenist Aryan ideology by claiming that Semitic and Aryan pantheisms belong to two different formations and neither could be inferred from the other. In short, Aryan pantheism is more articulated, more ideally fecund than the Semitic one.[26]

In the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth century, as a result of the works of Trezza, De Gubernatis and

22 Trezza, *Le religioni*, p. xiv.
23 Trezza, *Le religioni*, p. xix.
24 Trezza, *Le religioni*, p. 28–9.
25 Trezza, *Le religioni*, pp. 45–6.
26 Trezza, *Le religioni*, p. 54.

the Italian Orientalist school, the Aryan perspective came to be commonly found in Orientalist publications on the topic of religion. Italo Pizzi's book *Islamismo* (1898), for instance, looked at Islam from an Aryan perspective and claimed that it had been heavily influenced by ancient Greek paganism. Buddhism and Hinduism, however, proved to be more popular topics, especially because of their links with the new spiritual trends of theosophy, magic and Spiritism which became widespread in the first decade of the twentieth century when there was a revival of idealism in Italian culture.[27] Before moving on to explore the changes in perspective that occur with the advent of idealism, it is important to focus on the more racial dimension of Orientalism and how it developed dynamic relationships with disciplines such as anthropology and craniology.

From the 'science of religion' to the 'science of race'

In this section, I explore the interaction between religious and racial ideas, as well as between Orientalist scholarship and anthropology. I am especially interested in the ambivalent aspects of racial Aryanism put forward by Orientalism, and in how they were received and challenged in a controversial way by Orientalists such as De Gubernatis and anthropologists such as Cesare Lombroso and Giuseppe Sergi.

'Blasphemous' De Gubernatis: From mythology to race

In *Fonti vediche dell'epopea* (1867), which he calls the 'prime memorie dell'ariana famiglia' [the first memories of the Aryan family], De Gubernatis spells out how the divine in mythology is the result of the Aryan race's

27 See for instance, P. Pavolini, *Il Buddhismo* (1898), Alessandro Costa, *Il Buddha e la sua dottrina* (1903) and Berberis Tarsilio, *Il Buddismo esoterico* (1890).

special capability for observing the real. It is this special capability that enables the Aryans to observe the reality of nature, and discover, through language and metaphors, the divine in it. As De Gubernatis explains:

> Ora la scienza ci prova, con la materia viva del linguaggio, che non fu mai adorato altro Dio nel mondo, per lo meno nel mondo ariano, che la mirabile, la eterna natura, e che tutti gli dei sono nati per grazia del sole, del cielo luminoso e del giorno, tutti i demoni per grazia delle tenebre e della notte.
>
> [Now science proves, by means of the living material of language, that no other God was ever worshipped in the world, at least in the Aryan world, but admirable, everlasting nature, and that all gods were born thanks to the Sun, all demons thanks to darkness and to night.][28]

The positivist historical method applied to language allowed the etymological analysis of the language of mythology through the ages, and demonstrated how the language of Aryan religions evolved in parallel with their poetic descriptions of the real. As Daniele Maggi has pointed out, De Gubernatis, influenced by Müller's notion of mythology as the 'disease of language', referred to mythology as a 'misunderstanding of language' (*equivoco del linguaggio*),[29] a misunderstanding which was then partially resolved with the evolution of language and the parallel formation of the new poetic ideal of Christianity. Mythology, according to Müller, as George W. Stocking tells us, represented a mythopoeic age and 'was built on a common ground plan based on the observation of … natural phenomena'. The wonder with which the primitive Aryans gazed upon the 'solar drama', and those 'bright powers' coming and going from nowhere, had created the idea of divine powers.[30]

According to Maggi, however, by replacing the idea of disease with the idea of misunderstanding, De Gubernatis emphasised the evolutionary dimension of the Aryan myths and their potential for progress. For De

28 De Gubernatis, *Fonti vediche dell'epopea*, pp. 6–7.

29 See Daniele Maggi, 'Ancora su Carducci, M. Muller, De Gubernatis', in *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, i, pp. 87–114 (101).

30 Stocking, *Victorian Anthropology*, p. 60.

Gubernatis, as he puts it in *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (1874), myths are those elementary ideas that were impressed most strongly on the Aryan race, because 'la razza nostra era la osservatrice dotata di fibre più delicate e sensibili, e più atta pertanto a comunicare come a ricevere le impressioni' [our race was an observer gifted with the more delicate and sensitive fibres, and therefore more apt to communicate and receive impressions].[31] For De Gubernatis, mythology, rather than being an incurable disease, is a curable misunderstanding, curable thanks to the evolutionary nature of the Aryan race and their capability for correcting the misunderstanding of their ancient myths. De Gubernatis thus showed an even greater concern with racial ideas than his primary model, Müller. To put it in Maggi's words, there is in De Gubernatis that ambiguous concept of 'popolo' [people] connected 'con un'ideologia razzistica' [with a racialist ideology], which claims that 'non tutti i popoli sono capaci di progresso' [not all peoples are capable of progress], and that 'più delle altre razze lo è la nostra' [our race is the more capable of progress].[32] De Gubernatis, Maggi concludes, stressed that mythology was indicative of a race's particular capacity to perceive the real, and that race's consequent potential for progress (it is the capacity to perceive the real that makes a race progressive). In this sense, Müller's idea of wonder is turned by De Gubernatis into the Aryan race's capacity to perceive the real. According to the Italian Orientalist, therefore, myths have been the reality 'per cui la razza indoeuropea si innalzò a vita storica, con un linguaggio più potente' [through which the Indo-European race could raise itself to historical life with a more powerful language].[33] The sense of the real enacts the capacity of the ideal; it empowers language and poetics, and traces the path of spiritual and scientific progress of the chosen people.[34] De Gubernatis' emphasis on racial hierarchies is thus an eloquent example of the racist potential of Indological discourse and Aryanism. His parallels between philology, mythology and race embody

31 De Gubernatis, *Lettture sopra la mitologia vedica*, p. 14.
32 Maggi, 'Ancora su Carducci, M. Muller, De Gubernatis', p. 103.
33 De Gubernatis, *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica*, p. 18.
34 De Gubernatis, *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica*, pp. 18–19.

the dangers of Orientalism's expansion from a science of language and religion to a 'science of race'.

Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, Carlo Cattaneo and anti-racism

Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, a leading Orientalist who went on to become one of Italy's most important linguists owing to his pioneering study of Italian dialects and the *Questione della lingua*, diverged greatly from the Aryanist branch of Orientalism. He put forward another notion, considered valid to this day, that the Aryan and Semitic languages shared a common root. He also shared Carlo Cattaneo's idea of the human origins of language, and the belief that language and race are two distinct and unrelated matters. In so doing, Ascoli hoped to demolish the racialist dimension of Orientalist philology, and the Aryan–Semitic divide.

Cattaneo's major legacy to Ascoli is evident in the latter's use of Cattaneo's theory of the substratum, whereby the language of the Indo-European invaders in Europe positioned itself upon an existing layer of language, that is, the local languages which had made up the substratum. This theory was the basis for Ascoli's groundbreaking and highly influential work on the Italian dialects and the theory maintained the strong (but anti-racist) link between language and ethnology first established by Cattaneo (in which the resistance of the substratum is linked to physiology).[35] In a letter to Francesco Pullè, Ascoli explained how Cattaneo's theory of the substratum undermined those theories which posited a link between language and nation (that is, that each language belonged to a nation and that language was transmitted from nation to nation). Ascoli praised Cattaneo for having reconstructed the 'incroci, mercé i quali il linguaggio degli Arii si dilatava tra le antichissime genti' [contacts through which the Aryan language spread among ancient peoples]. However, Ascoli was more interested in Cattaneo's challenge of concepts about the fixity of races and about the descendents of the species and of culture in the endless flow of times, as

35 Sebastiano Timpanaro writes at length of the influence of Cattaneo on Ascoli in his, *Classicismo e illuminismo*, pp. 284–358.

these had quelled those imaginative conceptions according to which nations were populous and had interacted among themselves over the course of countless ages.[36] Thus, the link between language and ethnology that Ascoli borrowed from Cattaneo was exclusively related to the physiological ways in which language developed when one people transmitted its language to another people; that is, the way in which the people receiving the language spoke it (i.e. the way in which they pronounced various phonetic sounds). As Latin was the new Aryan language that spread throughout the Italian peninsula, the way it was spoken in different areas of Italy was shaped by the languages which had made up the substratum. This was different from stating that each people formed a nation and a race, and that language was transmitted from nation to nation or from race to race (i.e. from India to Germany). For Cattaneo, language was not equivalent to nation or race, and so it was possible to have several races within the same nation.[37]

Ascoli appropriated Cattaneo's cosmopolitanism (Cattaneo's nationalism was, after all, of a federalist kind) and the anti-racist link between language and race in order to demonstrate the plausibility of the monogenist notion of the unity of origin of Aryans and Semites. It could be argued that Ascoli was particularly motivated to take this approach as he was a Jew and had experienced anti-Semitic discrimination, but his findings were scholarly sound. Although he could not accept the polygenism of Cattaneo, he borrowed Cattaneo's democratic ideas in an attempt to argue in favour of the equal dignity of all human races. Ascoli wrote an important essay, *Studi critici* (1861–77), in which he argued in favour of the affinities between the Aryan and Semitic languages, and the ties between the people who spoke them. He criticised the belief that the 'popolo di lingua ariana e popolo di sangue ariano formino ... una sinonimia perfetta' [people of Aryan language and people of Aryan blood were .... perfectly synonymous].[38] This was a claim that had been made by both De Gubernatis

36 Letter from G. Ascoli to F. Pullé, quoted in Sebastiano Timpanaro, *Classicismo e illuminismo nell'Ottocento italiano* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1965), p. 344.

37 Timpanaro, *Classicismo e illuminismo*, pp. 339–352.

38 Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, *Studj Critici*, 2 vols (Rome, Turin, Florence: Loescher, 1861–77), ii, p. 50. Ascoli's critique, however, extended to most linguists as the idea

and Lignana in the context of Aryan Italy. Such a conclusion ruled out *a priori* the possible reconciliation between Aryanism and Semitism, and it was this conclusion that Ascoli criticised. Ascoli's theory of the philological link between Aryanism and Semitism was not well received at the turn of the century (although it acquired scholarly value in the twentieth century), but it certainly had an impact on another Jew who also argued that Aryans and Semites had ethnological links: the craniologist Cesare Lombroso.

Cesare Lombroso, racism and 'Aryan Jews'

One of the world's leading criminologists and craniologists, Lombroso showed a great deal of concern about anti-Semitic Aryanism. Lombroso's engagement with Aryanism is further evidence of the dialogue within the Italian positivist school of scholars of Orientalism and scholars of contiguous subjects such as anthropology. Lombroso, like Ascoli, was a Jew, and Ascoli influenced the younger craniologist, especially as Lombroso applied the notion of the Aryan-Semitic unity to skulls and race. Unlike Ascoli, Lombroso believed that there was a link between language and race and, as a polygenist, he strongly asserted the differences between human races. He developed a controversial racist rhetoric in which the Jews and the 'Whites' featured as superior races, with the 'Yellow' and the 'Black' races as inferior.

Lombroso reached his conclusions on the differences between races through his study of skulls. As the container of the brain and therefore of intelligence and thought, he believed skull differences were linked to differences in language and thought. For Lombroso, intelligence was determined by race and reflected in language. He claimed that intelligence is distributed in very different ways 'nel Negro, nel Giallo, nell'Americano in confronto del Bianco, specialmente Ario' [in the Black man, compared to the White man, especially the Aryan man]. The proof for this, he continues, is 'nel linguaggio, questo fedele ed eterno specchio umano del pensiero' [in language,

---

of an Aryan–Semite division became widely established in Orientalism. Ascoli, *Studj critici*, ii, pp. 51–2. See also *Studj ariosemitici* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1865).

this faithful and eternal human mirror of thought].[39] He sees the different races, like their languages and skulls, as stages of human evolution: 'il berbero, l'Arabo, l'Ebreo e l'Abissino sono gli stadi della trasformazione del Negro d'Africa in Bianco' [the Berber, the Arab, the Hebrew and the Abyssinian are the stages of transformation from the Black African to the White man].[40]

As an Aryanist, Lombroso found that the white Aryan skull is distinguished by its wonderful harmony of shapes. Unlike the Aryans, though, Blacks have 'il cervello ... poco sviluppato posteriormente' [a brain ... [that is] little developed at the back] and 'men pesante del nostro' [less heavy than ours]. The skull that contains black brains is 'molto lungo, e quindi stretto ai lati' [very long, and therefore narrow on both sides], while 'la faccia predomina sulla fronte, come le passioni affogano l'intelligenza' [the face prevails over the forehead, as passions drown intelligence].[41] Unlike most Aryanists of the time, Lombroso believed that the Jew and the Aryan were related. Like Ascoli, Lombroso thought that Aryans and Semites shared a common root. For Lombroso, of all the human races, the Jews are the most similar to the Aryans, especially because they have lived in Europe for centuries. He found it strange that Ascoli had not been able to identify an even greater linguistic affinity between Aryans and Semites than that which the great linguist pronounced controversially:

> Così pure un rapporto etnico ci riesce di sorprendere tra il Semita e l'Ario, che hanno comuni alcune tradizioni, e la struttura anatomica, e propinqua la dimora, benchè nel loro lessico appena è se di questa unione si trovi tracce nelle parole che alludono a navigazione, pastorizia, arte del ferro, e minori tracce ancora nella loro grammatica, spiate a stento, dall'Ascoli.
>
> [There is an ethnic relation between the Semite and the Aryan, as they have some common traditions and anatomic structure, and close dwellings; although in their language you may hardly find traces of words of that union referring to navigation, sheep farming, iron arts and still minor traces in their grammar, hardly explored by Ascoli.][42]

39 Cesare Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore: letture su l'origine e le varietà delle razze umane* (Padua: Sacchetto, 1871), p. 59.
40 Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*, p. 195.
41 Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*, pp. 20–8
42 Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*, pp. 41–2.

Lombroso even dedicated a book to the question of anti-Semitism in order to attack those Aryanists who disregarded the idea of Aryan/Semite unity and affinity. In his *L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne* (1894), he goes so far as to demonstrate through craniology and the comparison of skulls that the Jew is more Aryan than Semitic:

> Tutto l'antagonismo etnico se ne sfuma dunque al lume della craniologia, essendo l'Ebreo più Ario che Semita. Questa larga base Aria, fecondata dalla mescolanza etnica … e coll'innesto climatico … ci spiega come, malgrado tante cause di inferiorità, date speciali circostanze, gli Ebrei siansi così presto adattati agli usi arii, si siano così assimilati l'intelligenza aria, e l'abbiano in qualche caso perfino superata.
>
> [All the ethnic antagonism is dismissed by craniology as the Jew appears more Aryan than Semitic. The large craniological Aryan base, which is the result of the ethnic mixture … and the impact of climate … explains to us how, in spite of many causes of inferiority, given the special circumstances, the Jews adapted quickly to the Aryan habits and assimilated Aryan intelligence, and have, in some case, overcome them.][43]

Language, intelligence, the skull and race are thus the elements on which Lombroso relies to prove how misleading anti-Semitism was, especially in its stubborn divide between Aryans and Jews. As for the other races, though, they are confirmed as being inferior to the Aryan. Interestingly, the other Semites, Arab Muslims, are considered unrelated and inferior to the Aryans. Ironically, although Lombroso rejects anti-Semitism that targets the Jews, he welcomes anti-Semitism that targets Muslims, whom he considers only slightly superior to blacks.[44]

This anti-Semitism specific to Muslims is also used by Lombroso to argue that race is a factor responsible for degeneration associated with criminal behaviour. In what was perhaps Lombroso's most acclaimed book, *L'uomo delinquente* (1876), with which Lombroso made his name as a positivist criminologist, he maintained that criminal activity abounded among the non-Aryan races. The less Aryan part of Italy was the south, and it was no coincidence that it was here that crime flourished. When dealing with

43 Cesare Lombroso, *L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne* (Turin-Rome: Roux Editori, 1894), pp. 41–2.

44 Lombroso, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore*, p. 195.

crime in Sicily, Lombroso points out the role of Semitic – Muslim rather than Jewish – blood in determining criminal degeneration:

> Quando si pensa anche il malandrinaggio in Sicilia si concentra, quasi tutto, in quella famosa valle della Conca d'Oro, dove le rapaci tribù Berbere e Semite ebbero le prime e più tenaci dimore, e dove il tipo anatomico, i costumi, la politica e la morale conservano una impronta araba, resta facile il persuadersi che il sangue di quel popolo conquistatore e rapace, ospitaliero e crudele, intelligente, ma superstizioso, mobile sempre ed irrequieto e sdegnoso di freno, deve avere la sua parte nel fomentare le subitanee ed implicate sedizioni, e nel perpetuare il malandrinaggio.
>
> [When you think how brigandage in Sicily is concentrated in that famous valley of Conca d'Oro [the golden valley], where the predatory tribes of Berbers and Semites had their first and more tenacious homes and where the anatomic type, the customs, politics and the morals retained an Arab imprint, you may easily understand the blood of that people who are conquering and predatory, hospitable and cruel, clever but superstitious, unable to stop themselves, must take part in fomenting sudden rebellions, and in perpetuating crime.][45]

Lombroso's rhetoric resonates with the Aryan narrative of southern/Latin/Semitic decadence and the Semitic-Muslim 'contagion' of southern Italy and Europe popular in nineteenth-century Europe. This rhetoric was common among Italian positivist anthropologists and in particular in the work of Alfredo Niceforo and, more importantly, one of Lombroso's main followers, Giuseppe Sergi.[46] Sergi made his name from the 1880s onward, when

45 Cesare Lombroso, *L'uomo delinquente studiato in rapporto alla antropologia, alla medicina legale ed alle discipline carcerarie* (Milan: Hoepli, 1876), p. 124.

46 Niceforo's work is an interesting example of the confluence of German and European Orientalist thought in anthropology, physiology and phrenology. In one of his early books, Niceforo compares the northern Italian 'Aryan' skulls with the 'Mediterranean' skulls of southerners, and interprets the difference between northern and southern Italians in terms of race. Moreover, he also explains how in Graeco-Roman times the chaotic southern masses were kept in check by ancient despotism. See Alfredo Niceforo, *Italiani del Nord e italiani del Sud* (Turin: Bocca, 1901), pp. 19–20, 142–3. In a later work entirely dedicated to the Germanic race, Niceforo acknowledges the arguments of De Gobineau and Houston Chamberlain when discussing the idea that the Italian Renaissance had been a creation of the Germanic race and that contemporary Italians were part of 'di coloro "che hanno perduto l'equilibrio e che

philology and anthropology began to diverge and anthropologists such as Theodor Penka, Paul Broca and Isaac Taylor criticised comparative philology and based their new Aryan narratives on archaeology and craniology.[47] It is in this European context that Sergi elaborated his own critique of Aryanism by developing a contrasting but influential anthropological theory of Mediterraneanism.

Giuseppe Sergi: From Aryanism to Mediterraneanism (or from the Indo-European to the Eurafrican)

Sergi had pioneered notions of racial degeneration/regeneration ever since writing his book *Le degenerazioni umane* (1889). Together with Paolo Mantegazza, Sergi went on to become one of Italy's leading anthropologists. He was the founder of the *Società italiana d'antropologia* in Rome, and he was Italy's principal authority on race science. A disciple of Lombroso, he carried out his experiments primarily by taking skull measurements. Like Lombroso, he was a polygenist who believed that human races differed from each other. He argued that 'le razze di colore sono infinitamente inferiori alle bianche' [the coloured races are infinitely inferior to the white races], while 'le razze mongoliche, cinesi e giapponesi hanno uno sviluppo che si avvicina a quello delle bianche europee; ma sono anche differenti da queste per molti aspetti' [the Mongolian, Chinese and Japanese races have developed in a similar way to the European white race; but they are also different in many aspects].[48] Not only did Sergi believe in difference between human races; he also maintained that difference can

---

tentano invano di ritrovarlo"' [those 'who have lost their balance and are trying to get it back']. Alfredo Niceforo, *I Germani: storia di un'idea e di una "razza"* (Rome: Ed. Periodici, 1917), p. 31. For a general study on notions of race in liberal Italy with regard to the Italian north–south divide and the related internal racism, as well as how such racism played out, on the one hand, in Italian colonialism, and on the other, in the context of Italian emigration, see Aliza Wong, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861–1911: Meridionalism, Empire and Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

47 Trautmann, *Aryans and British India*, p. 185.

48 Giuseppe Sergi, *Le degenerazioni umane* (Milan: Dumolard, 1889), p. 3.

be found even within the same race, between superior and inferior individuals. Like Lombroso, Sergi regarded criminals, as well as prostitutes, as degenerated, inferior individuals. Interestingly, he applied the same notion to social classes, which he considered true natural distinctions that contribute to the inequalities of humans, because they perpetuate their different habits relating to behaviour, culture, character, way of living, nutrition and pleasure. The inequalities may be modified by new habits and by new hereditary conditions, but, after a long time, that is, in the following generations.[49] Racial difference and inequality are addressed in naturalistic and deterministic terms: 'il fenomeno è sicuramente di carattere biologico e si produce nelle stesse condizioni e per le stesse cause che danno origine alle variazioni nei due grandi regni organici, animali e piante' [the phenomenon is surely of a biological nature and it is characterised by the same conditions and origins which characterise animals and plants].[50] A staunch supporter of social Darwininsm, Sergi believed that regeneration should take place in a variety of ways: from nutrition to physical development, and from environmental protection to the innovation of education. The latter is of primary importance for Sergi, as he regarded education as the hygiene for the preservation of health.[51] Sergi's work is indicative of the considerable development of eugenic thought in Italy in the nineteenth century, when the improvement of the Italian 'race' began to be a serious concern.[52] As Sergi himself put it: 'Oggi noi dobbiamo tendere con tutte le forze a compiere la selezione artificiale coi due mezzi energici, repressione ed educazione, senza di essa non riusciremo a migliorare la razza' [Today we must concentrate our strengths on artificial selection by two means: repression and education, without the latter we shall never improve the race].[53]

49 Sergi, *Le degenerazioni umane*, p. 9.
50 Sergi, *Le degenerazioni umane*, p. 10.
51 Sergi, *Le degenerazioni umane*, pp. 214–18.
52 Claudio Pogliano, 'Eugenisti, ma con giudizio', in *Nel nome della razza: Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia*, ed. Alberto Burgio (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), pp. 423–32 (429–30).
53 Sergi, *Le degenerazioni umane*, p. 228.

The race Sergi wanted to improve and regenerate was the Mediterranean race which Aryanism had put under scrutiny. The first step he took towards Mediterranean regeneration, therefore, was the challenge of Aryanism. He summed up his scepticism about the Aryan idea and about Orientalism's conclusions in his most famous work, *The Mediterranean Race* (1901):

> Whenever there has been any attempt to explain the origins of civilisation and of the races called Aryan, whether in the Mediterranean or in Central Europe, all archaeologists, linguists, and anthropologists have until recent years been dominated by the conviction that both civilisation and peoples must have their unquestionable cradle in Asia.[54]

According to Sergi, the cradle of European civilisation was not in India, but in Africa. He challenged the Aryan bias of narratives of origin by proposing a different geography of the history of civilisation. He claimed that European civilisation was not Indo-European, but Eurafrican. Although Sergi believed that the races of Europe were a mixture of 'Eurasics' or Aryans and 'Eurafricans' or Mediterraneans, he held that the contribution of the former related chiefly to the linguistic sphere, whereas the contribution of the latter related to civilisation and culture. The Eurafrican 'species' had not come from the north and Asia, but from Africa and the Mediterranean south. The *Homo eurafricus*, Sergi argued, had three varieties: the African, the Mediterranean and the Nordic. Both Mediterraneans and Nordics were subset races of the Hamites, and they had all originated in the Horn of Africa. The Eurafrican had created all the major civilisations of the Mediterranean and Europe, from that of the Egyptians to that of the Graeco-Romans, and from that of the Renaissance to that of modern Europe.[55]

54 Giuseppe Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race: A Study of the Origins of European Peoples* (London: Walter Scott, 1901), p. 1. This book, written in English by Sergi, deals with the theory of a Mediterranean race already presented in the Italian text *Origine e diffusione della stirpe mediterranea* (Rome: Dante Alighieri, 1895). Not a translation per se, the English version is richer, but more concise, and in open dialogue with international figures that do not feature in the Italian version. I have preferred to use the English version in this book for its more international relevance.

55 Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race*, pp. 252–9.

The debate initiated by Sergi centred on the notion of the origins of Rome and the Italic people. In his *Arii e Italici* (1898), he explained that the Italics were an indigenous ethnic group of Italy and Latium, and that Rome was not Aryan but exclusively the creation of Mediterranean civilisation.[56] Sergi argued that the Aryans who had come to Italy were not the Italics, and that there had never been an Italic branch of the European-Aryan family. The Aryans that had arrived in Italy from the north (and from Asia) were the barbarians who were then assimilated into the Mediterranean civilisation. Their influence was confined mainly to the imprint they had left on the languages of Europe. In this way, Sergi inverted the Orientalists' assertions that the Italic languages were a branch of the Aryan family of languages (and races). It is interesting to note that, despite this inversion, Sergi used the theory of the substratum – developed by Ascoli, who was influenced by Cattaneo, and later Pullè – to discuss the linguistic influence of the Aryans in Italy. Unlike the Orientalists, though, he argued that this influence was confined to northern Italy as the Romans (or the Italics) had managed to contain the Aryan domination in the northern part of the peninsula. In Sergi's narrative, the whole of the peninsula was already inhabited by Italics, the autochthonous race who fought against the Aryans.[57] As he argued in a later book, entitled *Italia. Le origini* (1919), in short, 'la città di Roma è una vittoria dei mediterranei indigeni d'Italia, dopo la loro elevazione per mezzo della cultura mediterranea, sui barbari Arii' [the city of Rome is a victory of the Mediterranean people indigenous to Italy, after they imposed Mediterranean culture on the barbarian Aryans].[58]

Sergi created ambivalent links between language and race, and attributed specific characterial connotations to categories such as the Aryan, which he had previously stressed should be seen only in linguistic terms. In *Arii e Italici*, he speaks of the character and sentiments of the Aryans and Mediterraneans, with particular reference to Aryan 'order' and Mediterranean 'anarchy':

56 Giuseppe Sergi, *Arii e Italici. Attorno all'Italia preistorica* (Turin: Bocca, 1898), p. 221.
57 Sergi, *Arii e Italici*, p. 172.
58 Giuseppe Sergi, *Italia. Le origini* (Milan-Turin: Bocca, 1919), p. 440–1.

> Mentre nella stirpe aria l'individuo facilmente si fonde nell'aggregato senza nessun sagrifizio ...; nella stirpe mediterranea, al contrario, ogni individuo vuole emergere dalla massa sociale .... Portata agli estremi in questa differenza trovasi il sentimento di anarchia da un lato ... e quello dell'ordine, dall'altro, come fenomeno comune.
>
> [While within the Aryan race the individual easily fuses with the mass without any sacrifice ...; in the Mediterranean stock, on the contrary, each individual wants to emerge from the social mass .... Taken to the extreme, in this difference you find on one side the sentiment of anarchy ... and on the other that of order, as a common phenomenon.][59]

Moreover, Sergi linked these characterial and racial elements to the progress of civilisation. He argued that, because in Aryans the individual feeling is inferior to the social one, they did not feel the impulse to emerge from their primitive state. It was the Roman conquest that enabled them to progress.[60] Rome, however, achieved its greatness by means of despotism. On the one hand, this was necessary to control the undisciplined Mediterranean masses. On the other, the absence of the ancient despotism in modern times meant that the more ordered Aryan masses eventually prevailed over the undisciplined Mediterraneans.[61] On the other hand, he dismissed any link between language and race as Orientalists, historians and archeologists would have it. In Europe, there are Aryans of language, Sergi insisted, and he urged scholars like Max Müller not to draw any link between language and civilisation, as from such a link 'è nato un panariismo nella dottrina e nella storia, che da più anni domina l'Europa, come un fatto dimostrato, anzi come una dottrina dommatica' [is born a pan-Aryanism in doctrine and history that has dominated Europe for years as a demonstrated fact, or better as a dogmatic doctrine].[62] It is interesting that Sergi refers to Aryanism as a dogmatic doctrine, whereas Orientalists like Puini and Classicists like Trezza had considered Aryanism an antidote

59 Sergi, *Arii e Italici*, p. 191.
60 Sergi, *Arii e Italici*, p. 192.
61 Sergi, *Arii e Italici*, p. 192.
62 Giuseppe Sergi, *Gli Arii in Europa e in Asia. Studio etnografico* (Turin: Bocca, 1903), p. 13.

to the dogmas of Catholicism. This is yet another example of the mouldability of Aryanism as a discursive trope.

It was even harder for Sergi to accept Penka's position, according to which the Aryans originated in Scandinavia and created the Greek, Latin, Indian and Iranian civilisations. This argument was similar in many ways to that of other race theorists of the time, who asserted that the Italian Renaissance had been the achievement of the Germanic race. In Penka's case, however, even the Romans appear as Germanic. Sergi commented on Penka's position in the context of both Italy and India. On the one hand, he held that 'tutti coloro che continuano a denominare Italici gl'invasori arii, rovesciano la storia' [all those who continue to consider the Italics the Aryan invaders overturn history].[63]

In a book which he devoted entirely to the decadence of Latin nations, *La decadenza delle nazioni latine* (1900), Sergi attempted an anthropological account of the reasons for this decadence while also outlining a path to regeneration. The rhetoric of Latin regeneration is articulated through two narratives: on the one hand, in line with his criticism of Aryanism and Orientalism, he continued to frame his discussion within a narrative of Mediterraneanism according to which even the civilisation of northern Europe is the achievement of the Nordic subset of the Mediterranean race (albeit with a slight Aryan contribution with regard to order and discipline); on the other, however, he elaborated a criticism of Latinism which is in contrast to his Mediterraneanism. According to Sergi, the Italians' 'peccato originale' [original sin] is to perpetuate the idea of a classical renewal. The nation's life needs to be based on an ideal which reflects the present condition of that nation and people, that is, on that condition which reflects the reality of the 'bisogni non soddisfatti nel momento storico' [unsatisfied needs in the historical moment].[64] Utopianism can be useful like any ideal. However, it is important that the ideal is not a 'falso ideale di rinnovamento del passato, di risurrezione di ciò che è morto' [false ideal of renewal of the past, of resurrection of that which is dead]. Sergi thus maps the path to regeneration warning against those ideals which are not concerned with

63 Sergi, *Gli Arii in Europa e in Asia*, p. 37.

64 Giuseppe Sergi, *La decadenza delle nazioni latine* (Turin: Bocca, 1900), p. 19.

the 'avvenire' [future] and do not bring a 'mutazione continua delle forme sociali, che è vita' [continuous mutation of the social forms, which is life]. It is these ideals that should be avoided as they produce only immobility of thought and sentiment, and lead to a 'decadenza finale' [final decadence].[65] Sergi thus claimed that it was through science, education and the arts that regeneration must be carried out. He did not envision Italy as a future military power (according to him, the defeats in the colonial wars of Dogali and Adua had confirmed this), but as a major cultural power, as it had been in the Renaissance with Galileo.[66]

Sergi's challenge of Aryanism and Orientalist ideas, as well as his Mediterranean theory and his ambivalent Latinism, went on to shape the Italian racial thought of the early part of the twentieth century, which consequently became less focused on Aryanism. Crucially, Sergi even had a considerable impact on the Orientalist scholarship on the Horn of Africa, which in time served the purposes of Italian colonialism. While links between philology, ethnicity and religion continued to be adopted by Orientalists such as Carlo Conti Rossini and Enrico Cerulli, it was no longer the Aryan idea that prevailed among these scholars of the Horn of Africa, but the Eurafrican or Mediterranean idea that, among other things, created a kinship between Africa and Italy.

Colonial Orientalism: Philology, race and religion on the Horn of Africa

From the 1910s, Oriental Studies were given a new impulse by the Italian government in the context of colonial expansionism. Through the impact of Sergi, Italian colonial Orientalism sought to develop a more independent voice through the Eurafrican theory. In this section, I trace some of the developments in Orientalist colonial scholarship, but focus in particular on Sergi's impact on the main Orientalist scholar on the Horn of Africa at the turn of the century: Carlo Conti Rossini. I am primarily interested in how Aryanism comes into play with the Hamitism first coined by Sergi in his

65 Sergi, *La decadenza*, p. 23.
66 Sergi, *La decadenza*, p. 342.

theorisation of the Eurafrican race, and how philology, race and religion were used to study the Italian colonial subjects of the Horn of Africa. As will become clear, this branch of Orientalist scholarship is precisely the branch Said held responsible for studying Oriental colonial subjects with the aim of exercising power over them.

It is worth beginning by noting the efforts of the Italian government to promote and invest in Orientalist scholarship for the sake of Italian colonialism and the consequent quest for a better standing on the world stage. The renewed interest in Orientalist colonial scholarship – a branch of professional Orientalism entirely dedicated to the study of Italian colonial subjects – was sparked when Francesco Pullè was instructed by the Italian Ministry of Education to provide the general background of Oriental Studies in the major European nations in relation to their colonial campaigns. The resulting document would be used to formulate proposals on the basis of the experience of foreign countries with greater experience, but that 'paiono meglio applicabili ai casi nostri' [appear most applicable to our cases].[67] As may be expected, the first part of the work seeks to legitimate the study of the Orient for colonial purposes in light of the past Italian 'primato degli studi e delle conquiste dell'Oriente' [primacy in the study and conquest of the Orient]. The focus is on the early modern Italian city-states, when 'l'Italia era il centro principale dell'Europa nei rapporti con l'oriente' [Italy was the principal centre of Europe in the relations with the Orient], and 'gli'italiani … i piloti dell'Europa' [Italians … the leaders of Europe]. Again, Orientalism seems to mediate the relationship between Italy and Europe, in that Italy is either depicted as the former European centre or the contemporary European margin. Italian Orientalism and colonialism are seen as instruments leading to a more central role in Europe for Italy. In order to serve this purpose, Pullè goes on to provide examples of past Italian relations with the Orient, as a way to legitimise the contemporary Italian colonial enterprise in the Orient, as well as detailed accounts of contemporary chairs of Orientalism in Europe (Britain, France, Germany and Russia, in particular, but also Austria, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, 'Scandinavia', Denmark and Finland) as a

67 Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, *Gli Studi Orientali e la Espansione Coloniale* (Bologna: Azzoguidi, 1914), p. 5.

way to provide the pan-European dimension of the phenomenon in the colonial context. The second part of the work provides a similar account of Italian chairs of Orientalism according to specialisms from Sanskrit Studies to Arabic, Coptic, and Semitic Studies. Pullè concludes by suggesting that more effort and commitment is needed from the Italian State for the growth of professional Orientalism in Italy.[68]

The document also proposes to turn the *Istituto Orientale* of Naples into a new centre for colonial Orientalism in the aftermath of the occupation of Libya. In the new curricula of the institute, Pullè envisages courses for the formation of colonial administrators, including courses in the languages spoken in the colonies, the customs of the indigenous subjects, as well as on the agricultural and industrial infrastructure that could be used to benefit the Italian colonies, which in turn may be able to 'fornire utilità economiche e finanziare alla madre patria' [provide economic and financial benefits for the mother country].[69] Although Italian colonialism had begun in the 1880s with the acquisition of the colonies of Eritrea and Somalia in the Horn of Africa, it was upon the Italian occupation of Libya in the aftermath of the Italo-Turkish war in 1911 that Italian colonialism gained momentum. As a result, the two major areas of study in colonial *orientalistica* were, on the one hand, Islam and the population and languages of Libya,[70] and on the other, the languages, ethnology, ethnography of the Horn of Africa and Coptic Studies. Pullè was particularly concerned with the study of Arabic both in Italy and in Lybia. For the Arabic schools in Lybia, the programme of study included the interpretation of the Koran, theology, Muslim law, Arabic philology and Italian law. In relation to Islam,

68 Pullè, *Gli Studi Orientali e la Espansione Coloniale*, p. 46.

69 Pullè, *Gli Studi Orientali e la Espansione Coloniale*, p. 38.

70 Some of the works include Giuseppe Gabrieli, 'Una scuola modello di studi orientali pratici e coloniali', *Rivista Coloniale*, 1 (1913), 25–48; Ignazio Guidi, *Le popolazioni delle colonie italiane* (Rome: Bertero, 1913); Eugenio Graffini, *L'arabo parlato nella Libia* (Milan: Hoepli, 1916). In parallel with these, similar publications also appeared in the field of race science. See, for instance, A. Clerici, 'Biologia ed etnologia delle unioni miste in Libia', *Rivista Coloniale*, 2 (1914), 15–39; Vincenzo Giuffrida-Ruggieri, 'Alcuni dati retrospettivi e attuali sulla antropologia della Libia', *Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia*, 4 (1915), 57–90.

it is worth mentioning the figure of Carlo Alfonso Nallino, a towering scholar of Arabic and a central figure in training Italian colonial administrators for the *Istituto Coloniale Italiano*.[71]

The scholarship on the Horn of Africa is also interesting due to its relevance to the debate between the Indo-European and the Eurafrican concepts. Sergi worked on Ethiopia and the Hamite race at the time of the failed Italian attempt to colonise the area, especially after the Italian defeat of Adwa in 1896. As already seen, according to Sergi, the Hamite and Mediterranean races had the same origins, which also implied that Italians and the Africans of the Horn were different varieties of the same species. Sergi expressed his views in his *Africa: antropologia della stripe camitica (specie Eurafricana)* (1897),[72] which remained a milestone in the scholarship on the Horn of Africa, and the basis on which Orientalists such as Conti Rossini built their work on the Italian colonies of East Africa in the liberal and fascist periods.

The influence of Sergi's work also needs to be seen in light of the international debate on the origins of the Egyptians. The debate questioned whether the Hamites (the people of the Horn of Africa) were Aryans, as the first Indo-European theories had suggested, or autochthonous of Africa. The debate, very popular in America, was especially relevant to the question of slavery.[73] Conti Rossini, in a work on Italian Eritrea entitled 'Schizzo

71 See correspondence between the *Istituto*'s director, E. Artom, and Carlo Alfonso Nallino, dated 20 January 1920, in which the *Istituto*'s director discusses the programme and teaching of the 'Corso amministrativo coloniale', in Fondo Nallino, *Istituto per l'Oriente*. In a book published a few years earlier which focused on the Ottoman Caliphate, Nallino goes so far as to argue that the Caliphate of the Ottoman Sultan can be considered a centre for political action against European rule. Crucially, Nallino warned that it is worrying that the European states are concerned with the reconstitution of an institution that spontaneously perished centuries ago and which, if it existed, would be the antithesis of the European domination of territories inhabited by Muslims. See Carlo Alfonso Nallino, *Appunti sulla natura del Califfato in genere e sul presunto 'Califfato ottomano'* (Rome: Ministero Affari Esteri, 1917).

72 Giuseppe Sergi, *Africa: antropologia della stripe camitica (specie Eurafricana)* (Turin: Bocca, 1897).

73 See Young, *Colonial Desire*, Chapter 4.

etnico e storico delle popolazioni eritree' (1913), comments on this topic and argues that the Hamites were autochtonous of Africa and not Indo-European. His methodologies of enquiry include 'l'indagine filologica' [philological enquiry], with 'l'ausilio dell'etnografia, dell'antropologia' [the aid of ethnography and anthropology].[74] Conti Rossini explains that craniology had been the subject of criticism, especially in the field of anthropology, and he defended skull examination by arguing in favour of the study of skeletons and its documentary authority. Through these scholarly approaches, Conti Rossini was able to demonstrate that the people of the Horn of Africa were autochtonous Hamites:

> Secondo la filologia, o, meglio, secondo una scuola di filologi, de' quali il più illustre è l'austriaco Leo Reinisch, e le cui conclusioni concordano, più o meno largamente, con l'antropologia, o, meglio, con quelle d'una scuola d'antropologi, de' quali il più illustre è l'italiano Giuseppe Sergi, … antichissimamente nelle regioni centrali dell'Africa Equatoriale esistette una razza, o nucleo di genti, chiamate, in mancanza di meglio, camitiche, le cui diramazioni a mano a mano, in un periodo lunghissimo di secoli, andarono occupando, sin da età immemorabili, quasi tutta l'Africa Settentrionale, dal Sahara al Mediterraneo, dalle Isole Canarie al Mar Rosso.
>
> [Accordingly to philology – or, better, to a philological school, of which the most famous scholar is the Austrian Leo Reinisch, whose conclusions agree, more or less with that anthropological school of which the most famous scholar is the Italian Giuseppe Sergi – … in the central regions of Equatorial Africa in ancient times there existed a race, or a nucleus of peoples, called, for want of a better term, Hamites, whose branches, little by little, had been occupying, since time immemorial, almost all of North Africa, from the Sahara to the Mediterranean, from the Canary Islands to the Red Sea.][75]

For Conti Rossini, like Sergi, the debate was therefore solved: the people of the Horn of Africa were clearly not Aryans; they were Hamites – a branch of the Eurafrican race – and in this sense, as far as the wider debate was

74 Carlo Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo etnico e storico delle popolazioni eritree', in *L'Eritrea economica: Prima serie di conferenze tenute in Firenze sotto gli auspici della Società di studi Geografici e Coloniali*, ed. Fernando Martini (Novara-Roma: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1913), pp. 61–90 (62).

75 Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo', p. 63.

concerned, slavery remained a problematic issue given that – ultimately – the Hamites were related to the Mediterraneans and the European Nordics, however inferior and non-Aryan they may have been.

In the same piece, Conti Rossini explains that the indigenous Hamites of the Horn of Africa constituted several groups which mixed with several other races and religions. He attempts the historical reconstruction of the succession and mixing of the various ethnic groups, especially in the region of Eritrea. Somalia and Ethiopia are also mentioned in relation to exchange between peoples and the migration of peoples from one region to the other, in conjunction with the relations between Hamites and Semites, but also for constituting a 'famiglia linguistica' [linguistic family] whose ethnography clearly shows 'incroci con popolazioni africane non camitiche, con razze negre' [interbreeding with non-Hamitic African populations, with black races].[76] In this context, Conti Rossini points out that, unlike Egyptians and their civilisation – the greatest civilisation of the Orient – many Hamitic families and clans 'vagavano nelle regioni etiopiche, senza riuscir a sollevarsi ... da uno stato selvaggio o semi-selvaggio' [wandered in the Ethiopian regions without managing to lift themselves ... from a wild or semi-wild state].[77] This would explain why the Ethiopians did not reach the same civilisational heights as the Egyptians, even if they were all Hamites. Arabia is also mentioned by Conti Rossini as a crucial region in the understanding of the Horn of Africa, especially as the Islam and Semitism which came from it were considered the causes of the decline of Egypt and the entire Horn of Africa.[78]

More than the various clans, families, tribes, and ethnic groups historically reconstructed by Conti Rossini, it is really worth mentioning how *orientalistica*'s colonial philology, ethnography and anthropology gave Orientalists the opportunity to articulate ideas and views on the indigenous populations of the colonies and their civilisation on the basis of philological elements rooted in ethnic and religious bias. The danger of this practice is even illustrated by Conti Rossini, albeit in reference

76 Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo', p. 65.
77 Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo', p. 66.
78 Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo', p. 88.

to foreign Orientalists who study the peoples of the Italian colonies. He spells out how tempting it can be for a philologist to 'sfoggiar peregrine conoscenze di storia, magari d'architettare tutto un sistema, tutta una ricostruzione storica' [show wide-ranging historical knowledge, and maybe to design a whole system, a whole historical reconstruction]. He accuses other non-Italian Orientalists of doing this, but also calls on Italian Orientalism to study 'l'indigeno anche per saperlo governare' [the indigenous in order to know how to rule them]. For Conti Rossini, it is the historical traditions, customs and consuetudinary law that Orientalism must study, even in their more 'laughable' manifestations, such as superstitious beliefs and practices. However, all this should be studied 'con amore' [with love], the Orientalist stresses, invoking by implication the end of having to resort to foreign works for the study of colonial subjects of Italy.[79] In a later work on the indigenous law of Eritrea, which he wrote while drawing up a code of law for the colony, Conti Rossini studied consuetudinary law, which he interpreted on the basis of race. Here he describes the Eritreans as 'un popolo, che parla bensì dialetti semitici, più o meno influenzati dagli idiomi camitici, e che ha tracce etniche semitiche, ma che sostanzialmente, nei caratteri fisici, è di razza camitica' [a people that speaks Semitic dialects, more or less influenced by Hamitic idioms, and that has Semitic traces, but who, in the physical characters, shows features of the Hamitic race].[80]

By embracing Sergi's theory and developing it in the colonial context, Conti Rossini confirmed that the Hamites had not originated in Asia and were not Aryan, and that therefore an African race had shown the potential to create a civilisation such as that of the Egyptians. Moreover, he confirmed the kinship between Italy and the Horn of Africa, as well as the unity of origins of Hamites, Semites and Europeans (a kinship that recalls the Indo-European kinship in the context of British

79 Conti Rossini, 'Schizzo', p. 60.

80 Carlo Conti Rossini, *Principi di diritto consuetudinario dell'eritrea* (Roma: Unione Editrice, 1916), p. v. Other Orientalist texts concerned with the consuetudinary law of the Italian colonies of the Horn include Enrico Cerulli, 'Il diritto consuetudinario della Somalia settentrionale', in *L'Africa Italiana*, 37, 1918, 120–37.

India). In this way, Sergi's anti-Orientalist criticism of Aryanism becomes part of a new Orientalist discourse on East Africa through the work of Conti Rossini.[81]

Sergi's influence on Orientalism is also interesting because it points to a reverse influence of anthropology on Orientalism. Initially, it had been Orientalism that had exerted an influence on ethnology and anthropology. With the influence of Sergi on Conti Rossini, two ideas of race become established in Italian Orientalism: the Aryan idea and the Mediterranean idea, which also contained the Hamitic idea of the African origins of Egyptians and Ethiopians (and Europeans). From the 1900s until the collapse of fascism, these ideas co-existed in Italian racial thought (it is also important to stress that the Hamitic people were Christian). If Conti Rossini was the leading proponent of the Hamitic/Mediterranean idea, Pullè was the supporter of Aryanism. However, in his last work, *Italia. Genti e favelle* (1927), Pullè attempted to reconcile Orientalism's Aryanism with Sergi's Mediterraneanism, thus becoming the leading philological ethnologist of the 'Aryan-Mediterranean' idea. We will consider in the epilogue how Pullè's last work was appropriated by fascist racial thinkers in order to give legitimacy to fascist racial thought. Many of the theories discussed in this section would be appropriated by fascist commentators, and not all for the purposes of racism: a strand of racial thought during the fascist years, in line with idealist discussions on the 'spirit', but also with theories of assimilation and anti-racism was used by the fascists to distinguish themselves from racist powers, and to forge alliances with European colonies for anti-colonial collaboration. We will see how Aryanism was employed to support racism, and Mediterranenanism to support anti-racism. In the meantime, the revival of idealism in Orientalist scholarship made it possible to discuss interiority, which would gradually come to be employed to refer to the nationalist spirit.

81 Barbara Sorgoni, *Parole e corpi: Antropologia, discorso giuridico e politiche sessuali interraziali nella colonia Eritrea (1890–1941)* (Naples: Liguori, 1998), pp. 93–103. Sorgoni also gives a detailed account of Sergi's influence on Conti Rossini and their role in the global debate on the origins of the Egyptians.

Carlo Formichi and Fernando Belloni-Filippi: Aryanism and idealism

If positivism had been the intellectual background that shaped post-unification Italian Orientalism, a new wave of idealism influenced Italian culture and *orientalistica* from the 1890s onwards. This renewed interest in idealism was partly due to the rebirth of spiritualist elements which had not completely disappeared with the passing of Romanticism and which had survived the subsequent wave of materialism and determinism. The return of idealism, however, was also the result of the crisis of positivism. This crisis was repeatedly assessed by Benedetto Croce, who described the general intellectual climate of the turn of the century as no longer at ease with agnosticism and the findings of the natural sciences. For Croce, the beginning of the new century witnessed a renewed interest in mysticism that made the superficiality of positivism unbearable.[82]

Orientalist philology during positivism had given birth to a new science of religion – comparative religion – in which religions, to put it in positivist terms, had beome 'fenomeni della storia' [historical phenomena]. Thus, the origins of gods were investigated in the same way as human origins, while 'la Bibbia [fu] studiata coll'esegesi filologica come i Veda e l'Avesta' [the Bible [was] studied by means of philological exegesis like the Vedas and the Avesta].[83] Aryan philology, according to Orientalists, had been particularly pivotal in the field of the science of religion as it had analysed the evolution of Aryan religious thought in parallel with the Aryan linguistic and ethnological evolution. However, during the new idealist phase of *orientalistica*, the attention of scholars returned to philology for the study of the supernatural, as well as the occult and magic in Aryan religion. From the early 1900s until the 1940s, most of the leading Orientalists in Italy showed great interest in the mystic idealism of Oriental religions. Carlo Formichi and Fernando Belloni-Filippi, for instance, wrote on Hindu and Buddhist spiritualism, while Giuseppe Tucci wrote about Buddhist spiritualism and magic in India, Tibet and China.[84]

82 Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Bari: Laterza, 1977), pp. 225–6.

83 Trezza, *Le religioni*, p. 65.

84 See for instance Formichi's *Apologia del Buddismo* (1926) and Tucci's *Indo-Tibetica* (1932–41). Both Orientalists also spent long periods teaching at Tagore's university between 1925 and 1930.

This new wave of interest in spiritualism and idealism manifested itself in all aspects of culture and involved the emergence of theosophy, as well as other esoteric and intellectual trends in Italy. In 1898, Arturo Reghini founded the Italian Theosophical Society in Rome, a branch of the Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blatavsky and Annie Besant in India and London. In 1905, Reghini also founded the *Biblioteca Filosofica*, or Philosophical Lending Library, in Florence, which offered collections of philosophy, psychology, theosophy, mysticism, history of religions, psychical sciences, magic, occultism, Christian Science, New Thought.[85] The *Istituto di studi superiori* of Florence continued to flourish even after the crises of positivism and the return of idealism. It is interesting to note that many of its Orientalist academics responded positively to the new intellectual trends and became more interested in Oriental mysticism, thereby abandoning a positivist and historicist approach to Oriental culture.

An example of the interaction between mystic idealism and Orientalism is given by Formichi and Ferdinando Belloni-Filippi in a book published by the *Biblioteca filosofica* with the title *Il pensiero religioso e filosofico dell'India* (1912). The book collected the lectures on the Vedas that the two Orientalists had given at the *Biblioteca Filosofica* that year. The authors trace the development of religious thought in India, while emphasising the idea that the age of the Vedas was the golden age of humankind. Far from merely representing the infancy of human religious thought, the Vedas show a concern with animism where 'ogni cosa appariva posseduta da spiriti, che in uno con le anime dei trapassati vagavano per il mondo dei vivi, portando ad ogni avvenimento il benefico o maligno contributo dell'opera loro' [each thing appeared possessed by spirits that, at one with the souls of the deceased, wandered around in the world of the living, bringing to each turn of events the beneficial or malevolent contribution of their actions].[86] The *Rigveda* was in fact imbued with magic, and these magical beliefs paved the way to the transition from polytheism to the

85 Giovanni Papini, 'Franche spiegazioni (a proposito di rinascenza spirituale e di occultismo)', *Leonardo*, 5 (1907), pp. 129–43 (136).

86 Ferdinando Belloni-Filippi and Carlo Formichi, *Il pensiero religioso e filosofico dell'India* (Florence: Biblioteca Filosofica, 1912), p. 7.

monism of Brahmanism, a new superstitious age which was characterised by cults and sacrifices.[87]

The relationship between positivism and idealism is also discussed in light of Indian religious thought. The idea of empirical reality is criticised by the two Orientalists as they claim that those who see a 'universo molteplice' [multiple universe] are under the effect of an 'illusione' [illusion]: that is to say that the empirical evidence of the multiplicity of things in the world is not real. Humans can only know and love things that exist in their own soul, consciousness and ego. There are only two elements in life, the Orientalists go on to explain, the Brahman (the body) and the Atman (the soul). However, the Brahman is not visible or comprehensible without the Atman. In this way, the Orientalists establish that positivism is not enough to engage with the mysteries surrounding the soul. Idealism is needed to disclose the Atman's nature.[88] The principle of idealism put forward by Orientalism is thus encapsulated in the following idea:

> Nulla esiste fuori della nostra coscienza e noi conosciamo, amiamo e possediamo le cose del mondo solo in quanto sussistono nel proprio Io. ... E così ogni cosa, moglie, figli, ricchezze, qualità di Brahamano e di guerriero, mondi, creature, dei, tutto l'universo insomma ci è caro, non per se stesso, ma per via del nostro proprio Atman, del nostro Io, della nostra anima, ch'è una sola cosa coll'anima del mondo.
>
> [Nothing exists outside our conscience, and we know, love and possess the things of the world only as much as they exist in our Ego. ... So everything, wife, children, wealth, qualities of the Brahman, and of warriors, worlds, creatures, gods, the whole universe, in short, is dear to us not in itself, but through our own Atman, the Atman of our Ego and of our soul, which is at one with the soul of the world.][89]

The emphasis is no longer on the historical process that determined how the Aryan race progressed from the Vedas to the Europeans as the only race capable of evolution; the focus shifts to the primitive dimension of timelessness and eternity, as well as spiritual universality, whereby the souls of

87 Belloni-Filippi and Formichi, *Il pensiero religioso*, p. 12.
88 Belloni-Filippi and Formichi, *Il pensiero religioso*, p. 54.
89 Belloni-Filippi and Formichi, *Il pensiero religioso*, p. 56.

individuals are likened to the soul of the universe in a neo-idealist, rather than positivistic, mode.

Despite all the ambiguities inherent in Aryan ideology, and the criticism it received, it is nevertheless revealing to see how Aryanism reverberated through various cultural sectors and influenced narratives of origins and evolution, scientific and religious progress, civilisation and modernity, but also secularism and, most importantly, national and racial identity, cosmopolitanism and Europeanness. I will now explore how Aryan narratives made their way from professional to literary and popular Orientalism, where Italian Euromania meets Anglomania and oscillates between Indomania and Indophobia, in line with the demands of the publishing world and its bourgeoise readership.

CHAPTER 6

Positivist Indic Orientalism in Anton Giulio Barrili's *Il tesoro di Golconda* and Giosuè Carducci's 'All'Aurora'

From the 1870s, ideas, themes and knowledge stemming from professional Orientalism, together with the figure of the Orientalist scholar (and the Indologist in particular), or the European traveller to the Orient, influenced literary aesthetics and popular genres in Italian writing. These narratives were underpinned by positivist thought and interacted with notions of liberalism, anti-Catholicism and secularism, in discussions of national rebirth and colonial expansionism, as well as Italian modernisation, according to European standards. My focus in this chapter is on works that exemplify the positivist years of the latter part of the nineteenth century – namely Anton Giulio Barrili's novel *Il tesoro di Golconda* (1879) and Giosuè Carducci's poem 'All'Aurora' (1881). I explore the extent to which these works embraced what Andrew C. Long has called an existing 'Oriental unconscious', that is, a way of perceiving the Orient based on fantasies that create 'a convergence of material and psychological phenomena constitutive of modern society and modern subjectivity in the West'.[1] I am interested in how these writers created an Italian 'Indian unconscious' by building on an existing European Orientalist tradition and Italian Indology, while experimenting with literary and popular forms such as realist poetry and the romance novel. As for the world of professional Orientalism, the works analysed in this chapter are concerned with ancient India as the original Vedic root of modern Aryan-European nations, and with contemporary British India as the most eloquent triumph of modern European

1 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 28.

imperialism. I argue that what emerges from these creative engagements with India is the cultivation of the European Self to the extent that the Italian 'Indian fantasy' is above all else a 'European fantasy', or a desire for modern European identity, race and status.

Barrili's *Il tesoro di Golconda*: Indian romances between desire and nirvana

Romance fiction in the context of European literary Orientalism, as Hsu-Ming Teo brilliantly demonstrates, contained several kinds of romantic and sexual fantasies. From the erotic and pornographic works of Richard Burton, such as *The Lustful Turk* (1828), to Henry Rider Haggard's *She: A History of Adventure* (1886–7) and Robert Smythe Hitchins' *The Garden of Allah* (1904), miscegenation and the exploration of women's sexuaI adventures, especially with non-whites, were highly entertaining, but taboo topics. In Britain in particular, with the expansion of the empire, an idealisation of the Orient or an Eastern enthusiasm for adventure developed alongside a desire to escape the constraints of bourgeois Western culture.[2] As Long suggests, the Orient becomes 'a subject of discourse and also a driving force for fantasies of the fin de siècle period'.[3] For Long, late nineteenth-century British writers writing about the Orient (although he focuses on Arabia) employed established narrative paradigms and received observations – a tradition which Long calls an Orientalist 'always-ready' – whereby writers would engage with tropes established by their literary predecessors and would 'perpetuate figures and imagery of the tradition as well as its pleasures'.[4] This Oriental fantasy was part of the commodity culture of the British empire,[5] which symbolised the age of high imperialism in global politics,

2 Teo, *Desert Passions*, pp. 58–75.
3 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 2.
4 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 14.
5 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 2.

and for which even the newly constituted nation of Italy developed a taste. Indeed, Barrili seems to engage with such British Orientalist commodity culture by representing British India as an Italian fantasy of empire. My interest in this section is in how Barrili's *Il tesoro* constructs an Oriental fantasy related to the desire structure of Italian bourgeois society at this time of nationalist expansionism and cosmopolitan but Eurocentric (and indeed Anglocentric) modernisation. I explore, in short, the extent to which Barrili follows in the steps of his European predecessors and develops what Long calls an 'Orientalist commodity', that is, an Orientalist fantasy which is a commodity that references sensuality and mysticism, and 'promises a change in the everyday life of a new middle-class subject'.[6] My argument is that Barrili's romance novel develops a kind of Orientalist commodity that concerns both desire and spirituality in the context of India, but that also engages in a complex way with the Italian cultural, social and political anxieties of the time, thus creating a specifically Italian romance Orientalism with a pan-European flavour.

Anton Giulio Barrili, romance fiction and Orientalist themes

Il tesoro is a striking example of the literary popularisation of professional Orientalism in the form of romance fiction. In this novel, romance unfolds in different directions, primarily involving two European couples who find themselves in India: one would-be couple, composed of a romance hero, the Spanish Duke of Marana, and a heroine, Miss Maud, daughter of British imperial administrator Sir Giorgio Lawson; and an already-formed couple, composed of an Italian Orientalist scholar, Guido Laurenti, and his Spanish but naturalised Italian wife, Luisa Argilleri, turned Laurenti. A tale of travel, science, empire and romance, *Il tesoro* tells of the corruption and redemption of the Spanish Duke of Marana, who seeks a respite from his business affairs in Spain by travelling to India to visit his friend, Guido, only to end up falling in love with his friend's wife. In India, the

6 Long, *Reading Arabia*, p. 28.

duke is infatuated with two women, Miss Maud and Luisa, having first met the former and then the latter, but much of the narration revolves around the duke's courtship of Guido's wife, who becomes the favourite of the two women. Although Luisa is shown to enjoy the attentions of the duke, the reader is later on told that she and her husband Guido had plotted to convince the duke to marry Miss Maud. The British young woman, in turn, seems to engage in a flirtatious relationship with Guido, who is appreciated for his scholarly talents and breakthroughs, and who rejoices in the young woman's attention. Barrili here thrills the reader by focusing on the allure of desire and adventure outside marriage, even though the couple is a happy one with a profound bond. Eventually, in order to fill his otherwise empty days, the duke is offered by Guido the opportunity to work on an archaeological site where, according to the local Brahmin, there is an ancient Hindu treasure, the Golconda treasure, which the Brahmins hid underneath the Parvady Temple when the Muslim Moghuls threatened to steal it after their occupation of the area. Although the duke accepts the offer only in order to continue his courtship of Luisa and even plots to take her away from his friend, after a nightmarish night in which Hindu deities appear to him, the duke experiences a pang of regret and sets out to confess his love for Luisa to both wife and husband as a way of recognising his dishonest behaviour. Guido does not let Marana finish his confession, spelling out that certain things should be left unspoken, and insists that both he and his wife would like the duke to marry Miss Maud. Once Marana is redeemed, marriage takes place between him and Miss Maud with the support of the Laurentis, and the novel ends with the consecration of the secular mysticism and nirvanic paradise of the Orientalist world of the scholar and his worthy wife.

Themes of desire and romance were, of course, popular in nineteenth-century European literature, and even more so in literary Orientalism.[7] In nineteenth-century Italy, the romance genre developed primarily as a result

7 While the tradition of romance novels dates back to Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), they witnessed a rise in popularity in Europe and the United States throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and indeed continue to enjoy popularity

of Barrili's prolific production: Barrili wrote over fifty novels, including two Orientalist romances, such as *Il tesoro*, and the novel *Semiramide* (1873), which is set in ancient Egypt. A gifted writer of prose, Barrili established himself as one of the most prolific writers of popular literature, to which he devoted himself after fighting with Garibaldi's military expedition for Italian unification, whose events he later narrated in a memoir entitled *Con Garibaldi alle porte di Roma* (1895). A close friend of Giosuè Carducci, who was instrumental in Barrili's obtaining of the chair of Italian Literature at Genoa University in 1889, Barrili was close to the positivist circles that dominated intellectual life in post-unification Italy. He also wrote a book on the renewal of Italian letters entitled *Il rinnovamento letterario italiano* (1890). Barrili's popular fiction, on the other hand, is sophisticated, beautifully written, historically informed and is underpinned by many of the contemporary philosophical trends stemming from positivism: from secularism and naturalism to scientism and historicism.

Barrili's romance Orientalism is shaped by realist and naturalist aesthetics of Darwinist derivation, as well as by an interest in the psychological, the occult, transcendence and the uncanny. As a result of the legacy of Romanticism, there is also a sense of mysticism, an engagement with the irrational, and an investigation of the power of emotions over reason, even if it is morality that triumphs in the end. Even more importantly, Barrili embraced a fashionable trend that continued to attract attention from both readers and publishers. It is not surprising, therefore, that *Il tesoro* went through over fifteen editions between 1879 and 1919. I am particularly interested in how Barrili, in *Il tesoro*, brings together two very popular trends of the time to satisfy the appetite of both readers and publishers of the new Italian nation: the scientific world of Orientalism and the fictional world of the romance novel, whose combination allows him to stage the Italian bourgeois fantasy of the modern European seeking the racial Self, adventure, escape and nirvana in mystical but barbarous (British) India.

---

globally. See Pamela Regis, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

Although European modernity is no doubt juxtaposed with Indian backwardness, the Orientalist world of *Il tesoro* is presented as a moral and didactic world that values India and the Indians. Themes of race and empire are ambiguously addressed in the novel, even if Englishness is associated with positive qualities and presented as the European model and standard (for Italians to admire and follow), or, better, as the European fantasy *par excellence* for the newly constituted Italian nation. Barrili astutely appropriates romance conventions to thrill his readers with a tale that explores the psychological dynamics of modern desire, but that ultimately provides Italians with a tale of Europeanness and Italian virtue, as well as Anglomania, racial modernity and imperial desire, set in mystical India. It is therefore crucial to explore these romance conventions in order to grasp Barrili's unique use of them in the context of his celebration of Orientalism.

According to Pamela Regis, there are eight specific elements that clearly define the romance novel:

> the initial state of society in which the heroine and hero must court, the meeting between heroine and hero, the barrier to the union of the heroine and hero, the attraction between the heroine and hero, the declaration of love between heroine and hero, the point of ritual death, the recognition by heroine and hero of the means to overcome the barrier, and the betrothal.[8]

Although Regis explains that the order in which these elements occur is not always the same, she insists that they all generally occur at some point in the novel, depending on the needs of the plot.[9] Barrili's novel contains these elements and adapts them to the context of Orientalism. If the hero and heroine of the novel are the Duke of Marana and Miss Maud Lawson, as it is them who marry at the end of the novel, the moral hero and heroine of the romance are, however, Guido and Luisa and their Orientalist world. It is them, together with the Brahmin Lacmana, Guido's friend, who teach the moral lesson to the illicit duke, and therefore to the thrilled reader, and it is them who are instrumental in redeeming the corrupt elements of the society presented in the work. Their actions lead to the elimination of the

8 Regis, *A Natural History*, p. 30.

9 Regis, *A Natural History*, pp. 31–9.

barrier to the love between hero and heroine, and eventually allow for the marriage to happen.

India and the world of Orientalism, through an oscillation between Indomania and Indophobia, remain the setting and context of desire for escape and adventure, as well as the stage of corruption and redemption. Marana escapes to India to find solace from his business affairs in Spain and the Laurentis had escaped a past of illness and pain. However, once in India, escape comes to signify many other things too, from the innocent flight of vanity of the Laurentis, who eagerly let themselves be flattered by the romance hero and heroine respectively, to the adventure and redemption of Marana, and the eventual spiritual elevation and divine union between the Laurentis. The treasure as a symbol of ancient Aryan India becomes the fulcrum upon which the mechanisms of corruption and redemption function. Indeed, the treasure becomes a symbol of the Orient as a commodity and consumable – the context of desire and adventure for Marana as he pursues both the treasure and his friend's wife, and the context of ethical commitment for the Orientalist who proposes the treasure hunt to his friend in the name of friendship towards Marana, the Brahmin Lacmana and the Indian society of Secunderabad.

The society of Secunderabad: Euromania and romance encounters

The romance encounter and drama take place within the European community in India. This is a European romance among the European élite circles of aristocratic travellers, imperial administrators and Orientalist scholars. European identity is negotiated by means of references to Europeanness as a common civilisational heritage of the British, Italian and Spanish characters. At the same time, Britishness and its racial connotations are painted admiringly so as to create the allure of the exemplary modernity of the British – especially of the British in India and their tradition of liberal imperialism – as a fantasy for Italian readers and a model for bourgeois Italianness. Similarly, Europeanness is set against Indianness through stereotyped distinctions between the European and Indian worlds, as European elegance, sophistication and civilisation are juxtaposed with

Indian inelegance, decadence and barbarism. What emerges from this picture is a progressive Europe that celebrates ancient India and appears to be rescuing the subcontinent from its contemporary misery: Euromania is supported by Anglomania, as well as by Indomania in relation to ancient India, and by Indophobia with regards to contemporary India. The reader is told at the beginning of the novel that the setting is the Hyderabad state, in British India, where 'il governo inglese' [the English government] is 'guardiano e protettore' [guardian and protector].[10]

Europeanness is addressed by Barrili as a brotherhood, and Europe as one whole community, a *patria*, with a similar set of customs and practices. The arrival of a European traveller in India, such as the duke's arrival, is called 'una fortuna' [a fortune] as such an event allows all Europeans, without distinction and instinctively, to practise the 'usanze civili della patria lontana' [civil customs of the distant homeland], thus renewing 'familiarità con l'Europa' [familiarity with Europe] (*Il tesoro*, 21). Euromania is also depicted as a British attitude, although it is, of course, part of the Italian fantasy: Sir Giorgio goes so far as to tell Marana that 'tutti ci sentiamo fratelli, qui meglio che altrove, poichè ci riconosciamo figli di una gran madre, l'Europa' [we all feel like brothers, here better than elsewhere, because we recognise ourseleves as children of one great mother, Europe] (53). Such Euromania is supported by Indomania: Indology, Indo-European philology and Aryan historicity are called upon at the start of the novel to seal the Europeanness of the hero and to pave the way for the virtuous Orientalist world of the Italian couple. We are told that Marana, perhaps like any cultivated European of the time, studied Sanskrit. Indo-European theory and Orientalist philology are called upon as the duke remembers how his 'maestro di sànscrito' [teacher of Sanskrit], whenever he compared an Indian word with their Greek or Latin equivalents, and noticed the similarity between them, would look at him 'con una certa aria di trionfo' [with a certain air of triumph] (4). A homage to ancient India is thus paid as the common ancestor of the whole modern European family and a signifier of (Indo-)European identity.

10 Anton Giulio Barrili, *Il tesoro di Golconda* (Milan: Treves, 1879), p. 2.

It is in this European context that the romance encounter between the hero and the heroine is constructed and then disrupted as a result of the duke's corruption. Barrili interweaves the conventions of the romance novel with a naturalism that focuses on the racial connotations of the heroine as a superior specimen. Miss Maud, when first described on the palanquin with her maid, appears 'di forme eleganti, bionda, con gli occhi azzurri, la carnagione bianca vermiglia, leggermente dorata dai raggi del sole indiano' [with elegant shapes, blonde, with blue eyes, her vermilion white complexion rendered slightly golden by the rays of the Indian sun] (9). British blondness and whiteness are signifiers of European excellence and very much part of the Italian fantasy of European 'northernness'. But Miss Maud's arrival with her maid also serves to illustrate the liberalism and democracy of the British people as a modern race – or, more broadly, the notion of European liberty versus Oriental despotism, a theme very popular in British literary Orientalism[11] – as Barrili tells us that, in a reversal of roles, implicitly in contrast with the portrayal of Hindu castes, it is Miss Maud who descends the palanquin first, only to turn towards her maid and help her get off the palanquin (although it is all well and good that four Indian men are carrying it). Marana is struck by the good heart of the young lady, which, together with her racial features and beauty, immediately seduces him (9).

Englishness and racialism, but also imperialism, Indophobia, democracy and liberalism, all grouped together in an Italian Anglomania, inform the construction of the European world of Secunderabad. Miss Maud is described as the starting point of a disquisition on blondness, whiteness and the role of women in British racial superiority and imperial might that quickly moves on to an exploration of the qualities of Miss Maud's parents. Mrs Lawson, for instance, is 'bionda … e bianca del pari' [blonde … and fair as well], and a beautiful woman. Mr Lawson, on the other hand, is used as another signifier of British democracy and liberalism. He is said to belong to the gentry, 'quella classe tutta britannica … di coloro che siedono alla camera alta' [that all-British class … of those who sit in the upper house],

11 See Teo, *Desert Passions*, p. 56.

who find themselves mingling with those common people 'innalzati dal lavoro, dall'educazione, dalla ricchezza, a meritare il nome di gentlemen' [elevated by work, education, and wealth, to deserve the name of gentlemen] (25–6). British civilisation and the imperial nobility of the British race is, however, assessed primarily through the role of women: Barrili is keen to stress that it is really in the English woman that 'si manifesta la nobiltà di quella schiatta colonizzatrice [the nobility of the colonial race manifests itself]. If her industriousness is what makes her respected, it is also what allows her to carry out the difficult imperial duty of showing 'pazienza per ciò che riguarda l'amore dei popoli' [patience for that which concerns her love of the native populations] (27–8). A woman is the heart of a British home, as well as the heart of the empire, Barrili tells us. An English home is thus a home that contains everything necessary and also everything unnecessary, and this internal order is crucial to the order of British imperialism: 'L'inghilterra militante estende così la fitta rete de suoi avamposti. Rule Britannia! E di ciò va gran merito alla donna inglese' [militant England thus extends the dense network of its outposts. Rule Britannia! And great merit for this goes to the English woman] (28).

Miss Maud, as the romance heroine, implicitly embodies all these qualities and is the young European woman and would-be coloniser *par excellence*. She is depicted, not without a hint of the pre-Raphaelite trend of painting popular in Britain in the nineteenth century, with idealistic qualities and grace, as a superior type known to all 'un po per consuetudine d'astrazioni filosofiche, un po per lunga tradizione di abbellimenti artistici' [partly because of the custom of philosophical abstractions, partly because of a long tradition of artistic embellishments] (32). The strength of the British race as an Italian racial fantasy is established through the examination of Miss Maud's somatic features, which are inherited from her father. These features include her blue eyes and the slightly elongated oval of the face, and her very white teeth, all shown with every smile, which, crucially, are of that solid shape and straight constitution 'che dinotano la fermezza tradizionale della razza' [that denote the traditional firmness of the race] (32). Somatic features and physical traits are in this way used in a typically positivist and naturalistic, if not biological manner, as the

racial characteristics of British people become the signifier of firmness – a fundamental quality necessary to implement European rule.

The other crucial European dimension of the initial society of the romance novel is the Orientalist world embodied by the Laurentis. Barrili is keen to provide the pan-(Indo-)European dimension of Italian Orientalism, as evidenced by Sir Giorgio pointing out that Laurenti's work is having an impact on the whole European and Indian worlds of Indology. Sir Giorgio is, in fact, familiar with Guido's excellent writings for the Calcutta Asiatic Society, as well as with the geologic collections sent by the Italian to the London Royal Museum. The nobility of the mission of the European Orientalist, and his friendship with the Indian world, is still emphasised by Sir Giorgio through the parallel made between Laurenti and William Jones. Sir Giorgio says: 'Il signor Laurenti, col pretesto di studiare l'antica lingua dei Veda, è entrato in grande dimestichezza coi bramini, che lo hanno accolto, … come uno di loro. Egli è oramai diventato un sancritista di prima forza, come lo era il nostro Jones' [Mr Laurenti, under the pretext of studying the ancient language of the Veda, acquired great familiarity with the Brahmins, who have welcomed him, … as one of them. He has become by now a Sanskritist of the first calibre, as our Jones was] (44). The scholar is also praised as he is totally dedicated to the Hindu Temple of Paravady, where, for Sir Giorgio, Laurenti 'ha trovata … una ricca miniera. … tutta scientifica' [has found … a rich mine … all scientific]. The Paravady Temple is one of the main settings of the novel and it becomes especially central as it is where the search for the Golconda treasure takes place. It is also the parallel setting to the Laurentis' European house, which is a 'villino … fabbricato da un signore europeo' [a little villa … built by a European gentleman] and then sold to the Laurentis (63–4). As the action moves to the other European setting, the Laurenti's *Sahibgar* (the house of the European), Barrili introduces us to the beauties of Luisa and the temptations of the duke, whose corruption constitutes the main barrier to the marriage between him and Miss Maud. It is in this other European setting that the illicit romance unfolds, facilitated by the duke's treasure hunt, which gives him plenty of time and opportunities to spend time with and court the beautiful Luisa.

The treasure hunt: Illicit desire, corruption and the ideology of Indology

In Barrili's novel, the illicit context of desire is the dimension of corruption and the barrier to licit romance, according to Regis' generic conventions. However, Barrili builds this barrier on the foundations of Orientalist ideology, and especially the Aryan–Semite divide established by comparative philology. The treasure hunt in particular constitutes what Regis would call the 'point of ritual death' in the romance novel, that is, when the barrier seems to become insurmountable. The reader is titillated at the prospect of Marana pursuing Mrs Laurenti during his stay at their house as the treasure hunt is ongoing, and is invited to fantasise about imminent developments as Luisa never seems annoyed or embarrassed by the duke's advances. But the treasure hunt is a narrative tool that works on a genre level as well as a thematic level: the corruption of the duke is paralleled with the corruption of the Muslim invaders who eventually seized the Golconda treasure. If, on the one hand, the treasure hunt parallels the duke's corruption and reinforces the barrier to licit romance, it symbolises, on the other hand, the way in which Hindu India had been corrupted by Muslim invasions, thus creating a clear distinction between Aryan and Semitic India. Barrili takes great care to let the reader know that it is Aryan India – that of the Vedas embodied by the Paravady Temple, the Brahmin Lacmana and the Golconda Hindu treasure – that constitutes Guido's Indological-Aryan world, whereas the Muslims – and not the British or the Europeans – are the enemy that invaded the Aryan lands, stole their treasures and were corrupt (like the duke, who pursued his friend's wife/treasure).

The duke's hunt

The Golconda treasure is the object and symbol of desire. Although Guido proposes the treasure hunt to give his guest the opportunity to get to know Miss Maud, the duke sees it as an opportunity to pursue Luisa. The allure of (a very marketable and consumable) illicit romance within a licit romance becomes the internal barrier to romance itself. The most notable example of the duke's illicit desire, and perhaps the climax in the slow build-up of the sensual relations between the duke and Luisa,

is when they are in the garden of the Laurentis' house, after Guido has left for his work, and the pair find themselves on their own, with only the distant threat of the gardener, who is working on the grounds of the house. Luisa is depicted as sensually dressed and as innocently awakening Marana's desire. Firstly, Luisa shows herself to be happy at finding Marana in the house, and tells him 'sia lodato il cielo' [heaven be praised] (224) that he did not go to the excavation works at the Paravady Temple. As Luisa embarks on a morning walk in the garden with the duke, Barrili depicts the dynamics of Marana's desire in the context of a paradisiacal India with biblical connotations:

> Don Fernando non guardava i fiori, potete immagginarvelo; guardava la signora, vestita con semplicità mattutina, d'una veste di seta cruda, il cui taglio garbato accompagnava le armoniche curve della persona. Il giovinotto pensò involontariamente ad Eva, ma ad Eva che fosse tornata nel paradiso terrestre, dopo l'invenzione delle vesti di seta e delle lattughe di merletto e di mussolina. Quando la signora si voltava a mezzo, per indicargli una pianta rara, o una forma strana di fiore, egli si beava nella vista di quel profilo ... soave, di quelle ciglia lunghe calate sugli occhi azzurri scuri, e di quelle chiome corvine che scendevano ad accarezzare l'orecchio, per rigirarsi in lucide anella su d'un collo alabastro. Eterni numi, quel collo! Come lo avrebbe baciato volentieri! Ma confessate che sarebbe stato un cattivo modo di cominciare una dichiarazione, che da un pezzo gli tremava dalle labbra.
>
> [Don Fernando was not looking at the flowers, as you can imagine; he was looking at the lady, dressed with morning simplicity in a raw silk dress, whose gentle cut set off her harmonious curves. The young man involuntarily thought of Eve, but an Eve that had come back to the earthly paradise after the invention of silk dresses and lace and muslin. When the lady half-turned to show him a rare plant or the strange shape of a flower, he enjoyed the sight of her pleasing profile, those long eyelashes lowered over her dark blue eyes, and that jet-black hair which came down to caress her ear and turn in lustrous rings on an alabaster neck. Good heavens, that neck! How happily he would have kissed it! But admit, it would have been a bad way to begin a declaration that had for a short while been trembling between his lips.] (227)

The reference to Eve as the temptress, and the heavenly image that it evokes, are used to give potency to Marana's illicit sensual desire, but is also in line with Indological representations of India as the place of creation, with the implication that such a paradise runs the risk of becoming

hell – though it is precisely this risk that causes the thrill of illicit desire. These moments of intense desire fuel the reader's excitement and make of romance Orientalism, even in the Italian case, such a consumable genre. The image of Marana's lust for his friend's wife is developed further by a moment of physical contact, although it only lasts for a second or two. Barrili tells us that, as Marana 'ammirava quel collo e moriva dal desiderio di farglielo sapere' [admired that neck and was dying to tell her] (227), he saw a chafer on Luisa's shoulder, which was moving towards her neck. This was a propitious moment for the duke to contemplate the racial qualities of Luisa and her 'pelle d'un bianco muto, morbida e liscia come la superficie del raso' [that skin of a inexpressive white, soft and smooth like the surface of satin] (228). Following the chafer becomes Marana's pretext for staring at Luisa's neck and, more daringly, for 'premere leggermente col dito su quella morbida superficie, a poca distanza dall'insetto' [press[ing] lightly with the finger on that soft surface, not far from the insect] (229). The thrill of the moment – for Marana, Luisa and the reader – is brought to an end by the arrival of another at this scene of illicit desire. Barrili hastily reassures the reader that it is not Guido, but the gardener. Upon the gardener's arrival and the cooling of the sensual excitement, Marana takes the opportunity to leave the house and go to the treasure's excavation site. Barrili gives us another insight into Marana's psychology of desire, this time debating whether or not he should have declared his love to Luisa during that fleeting moment of intimacy, and whether or not Luisa had given real signs to Marana that she too was feeling the same kind of desire for him:

> Potevo parlare; – pensò egli, mentre si avviava alle rovine; … Ma vediamola sino in fondo; avrei fatto bene a parlare? Che fondamento avevo, per spingermi avanti? Mi ha ella mai dato un barlume di speranza? Mi ha ella mai lasciato intravedere di essersi accorta di qualche cosa? Siamo giusti, io fin qua non ho fatto altro che dare importanza a certi nonnulla, gentilezze, amabilità, complimenti che l'amicizia giustifica.
>
> [I could have spoken; – he was thinking, while on his way to the ruins … But let's put it in perspective: would it have been a good idea to speak? On what basis could I have pushed myself forward? Did she give me a glimmer of hope? Did she let me catch a glimpse of something? Let's be fair, till now I have done nothing but give

> importance to the slightest insignificant thing, to kindness, amiability, compliments that friendship justifies.] (233)

Whether or not the duke's stream of consciousness rules out any illicit behaviour on Luisa's part, it is for the reader to assess. Barrili plays on this ambiguity in order to pursue the thrill of potential adultery, while also delving into the malicious intentions of the duke and his lack of scruples, as Marana exploits his friend's generosity. Guido's generosity is, of course, associated with Indology, Aryanism and Hinduism, while its betrayal with the duke's and Semitism.

Aurangzeb

Barrili sets the duke's tale of corruption within the wider tale of corruption surrounding the Moghul invader Aurangzeb's theft of the Golconda treasure. Indology's Aryanism and anti-Semitism underpin the narrative of conflict between Hindu and Moghul India. The Golconda treasure is the symbol of Moghul corruption on the one hand, and of Orientalist and Hindu virtue on the other. The virtuosity of the Aryan temple is established through the representation of the work and characters of Lacmana and Guido. For instance, Lacmana is the Brahmin behind the temple's survival and is portrayed as 'un sant'uomo che credeva ancora alla vitalità del culto di Visnù e al suo trionfo finale … cantando gli inni ammirabili del Rigveda e ripetendo i canti sublimi del Mahabarata' [a saintly man who still believed in the vitality of Vishnu's cult and his final triumph … singing the admirable Rigveda's hymns and repeating the sublime Mahabarata's songs] (65). Guido is also depicted as a saintly figure so as to elevate the figure of the Indologist and the mission of Orientalism. Barrili tells us that, after Guido Laurenti's arrival in the Paravady village, 'non si era più conosciuta la miseria nelle sue forme atroci' [misery in its atrocious forms was no longer known]. Indian misery is defined against Muslim conquest, rather than British imperialism and exploitation. The narrator warns us that, in order to understand the upsetting of traditional caste division, which is in turn said to have upset the structure of Indian society, one should turn to 'lo stato di servitù in cui sono caduti da

duecent'anni gl'indiani di questa provincia, davanti ai loro conquistatori mussulmani' [the state of servitude in which the Indians of this province had fallen for 200 years, facing their Muslim conquerors] (89–90). It is Muslim conquest, therefore, that is the cause of poverty and misery according to Barrili's Indic Orientalism. India, seen as a nation in such an account, is described as Hindu, and Islam is considered an intrusive element. However, the internal conflict within Brahmanic society is also blamed for the Muslim conquest. This was the moment when the Moghul king Aurangzeb invaded the area and, among other things, seized the Golconda treasure. Guido, Lacmana and the duke do not of course know that Aurangzeb found the treasure. It is only when they find Aurangzeb's letter in place of the treasure that they become aware of the theft. At the same time, the letter written by Aurangzeb that Marana and his fellow archeologists find in place of the treasure, along with a skeleton of the Brahmin student Nader who had fought to prevent the theft, evoke the world of the dead. Not only does this narrative tool provide even more otherwordly entertainment for readers; it also brings to a climax the early feelings of confusion experienced in the duke's nightmarish dream. Let us therefore reconstruct the major steps of the process of corruption and redemption via the treasure hunt.

Towards redemption: Transcendence, the uncunny and the occult

The depiction of Marana coming to terms with his own corruption is achieved through a series of events which pertain to the realm of transcendence, the uncunny and the occult common to popular Orientalism. If the starting point of this process is a direct confrontation with Lionello Edgeworth, Miss Maud's cousin, who was also behaving flirtatiously with Luisa Laurenti, it is thanks to nightmares, dream visions and the world of the dead inspired by India and Hindu myths that Marana is able to truly repent. Barrili introduces the first instance of shame, regret and awareness of betrayal on the side of Marana through Lionello's confession of his love for the same woman. Lionello's confession presents Marana with his guilty conscience: 'Tradimento! Ci penso tutta la notte, a quel caso di coscienza. Ma non tradiva, lui, per suo conto, e da un pezzo?. … Egli vedeva meglio

dall'esempio dell'altro la sua condizione di tentatore' [Betryal! He thought about this case of conscience the entire night. But hadn't he himself already been betraying his guest, and for a long time, too? … He was better able to see through the other's [Lionello] example his condition of tempter] (252). It is on that night that Brahmanic India contributes further to Marana's regret, when he experiences guilt about his corrupt actions in a dream triggered by the challenge of the treasure hunt, in which there appear Hindu gods and an unexpected turn of events. Barrili tells us that Marana

> Sognò … che il dio Visnù … lo conduceva nel sotterraneo a prendere il tesoro; che egli si impadroniva di un diamante di quattrocento carati, e così sfavillante da abbagliare Lionello; che Guido fuggiva con Miss Lawson, lasciando a lui di consolare la signora Luisa; che era felice … se non capitava Giacomo il giardinere … a rinfacciargli il suo tradimento, accusandolo di aver favoriti gli amori e la fuga di Guido; che la signora Luisa gli rivolgeva un'occhiata di sommo disprezzo e lo piantava li, per ritornarsene in Europa …
>
> [He dreamt … that the God Vishnu … would bring him underground to take the treasure; that he would take possession of a 400-carat diamond which was so bright that it blinded Lionello: that Guido would run away with Miss Lawson, leaving him to comfort Signora Luisa; that he was happy … until Giacomo, the gardener, turned up … to remind him of his betrayal, accusing him of having encouraged Guido's love and flight; that Signora Luisa looked at him with the highest contempt and left him alone to go back to Europe.] (263)

This is an early sign of Marana's recognition of his own corruption, and the transcendent world of Hindu gods and the uncanny nature of the events, have inspired him. Although this is the first instance of Marana confronting his own betrayal on a subconscious level, however, he is somehow still hopeful that he will succeed in both the hunt for the treasure and the hunt for Luisa.

The real process of redemption begins after the excavation work reaches its final stage and, instead of the treasure, Marana finds Aurangzeb's letter. In the letter, Aurangzeb explains how he found the treasure and decided to leave, along with the letter, the dead body of the Brahmin student Nader, to give the Brahmins a sample of the terrible might of the Moghuls. This letter and the skeleton are evidence of both the horrific ways of Islam, and

the misery that the Muslim invasions have brought and will continue to bring to India. The world of the dead that the treasure hunt brings to life is thus the turning point in the novel:

> Io, Aureng Zeb, figlio di Scià Gehan, nipote di Salim Gehanghir, il glorioso conquistatore dell'universo, ho disseppellito il tesoro che la vostra perfidia mi nascondeva, e chiudo, a custodia di questo foglio, il vostro alunno Nader, che ha osato chiedermi un premio per iscoprire il nascondiglio. Abbia egli in premio la vita eterna, e vi faccia fede di ciò che toccherà a voi, quando cadrete nelle mie mani.
>
> [I, Aureng Zeb, son of Scià Gehan, grandson of Salim Gehanghir, the glorious conqueror of the universe, discovered the treasure which your perfidy hid from me. To protect this sheet, I am locking up your student Nader, who dared to ask for a reward for discovering this hiding place. His reward is eternal life and he will serve as an example of what will happen to you, when you will fall into my hands.] (317)

Marana is hugely disappointed, especially as he is no longer able to impress Luisa, and it is Guido who consoles him with his usual calm friendship and scholarly sensibility. However, Guido does not miss the opportunity to stress the fanatism and savagery of the Muslim leader: 'era un fanatico, un feroce, e lo seppero i poveri principi indigeni, che cacciò di seggio e mandò a morte senza misericordia; lo seppe la religione di Brama, che egli perseguitò accanitamente' [he was a fanatical and cruel man, as those poor native princes, whom he overthrew and sent to death without mercy, found out; as did Brahma's religion, which he persecuted fiercely] (319).

In contrast to the fanatism of Aurangzeb, to which Marana's corruption is likened, Hindu maxims are used in order to console Marana. It is Lacmana who uses Hindu wisdom to comfort the disappointed duke. These maxims awaken morality and integrity in him – elements that are fundamental to his redemption. Through these maxims, Marana is reminded that 'l'uomo che non sa comandare ai sensi, non è capace di compiere il suo ufficio nel mondo' [the man, who cannot command his senses, is not capable of carrying out his duties in the world], and, more importantly, that 'i mali che noi facciamo al nostro simile ci seguiranno, come l'ombra seguita il corpo' [the evils we carry out against other fellow human beings will follow us as the shadow follows the body]. Marana begins to understand the level of corruption of

his behaviour, and Barrili tells us, by alluding to Hindu virtue, that 'quelle massime della filosofia più antica del mondo erano un balsamo per lo spirito infermo del duca di Marana' [these maxims of the world's most ancient philosophy were balms for Marana's ill spirit] (330–1). This is the turning point in the novel: it triggers the duke's redemption, although this occurs slowly, and is the impetus for the moral didacticism of the novel, which is entirely informed by the Indological world of the Laurentis.

From desire to nirvana: Restoring the moral order through Orientalist virtue

The failure of the treasure hunt, along with the triggering of the arcane forces of morality, coincides with the removal of the barrier – the recognition of the corruption of the duke – and the restoration of the moral order in relation to the generic conventions of romance. It is here that what Regis calls 'the recognition' takes place, that is, when 'any number of things can be "recognised"'; and if 'the barrier has been external, these impediments are removed or disregarded'.[12] Marana recognises his own corruption and betrayal by means of the world of Indology, Indian deities, non-existent Hindu treasures and, most importantly, the sacral world of the Laurentis and the aura of nirvana that surrounds them. If the Laurentis become the victims of Marana's corruption, the latter part of the novel focuses on how, from being the barrier to romance, the Laurentis become instrumental in the remaining stages of the romance conventions: the declaration, betrothal and marriage. The transition from desire to nirvana, however, is depicted as owing its merit to Orientalist righteousness and Guido's mystical relationship with Luisa, as well as the Indian paradisiacal environment around them.

The sacrality of the world of Orientalism embodied by the Laurentis is captured through the image of nirvana – the image of a state of inner peace and beatitude that the couple is shown to have achieved in India. Barrili describes the Laurentis' residence, or nest, in nirvanic terms:

12 Regis, *A Natural History*, p. 36.

> Pace! Bella pace! Divina pace! Come riusciva facile sentirla in quel luogo.... . si andava più oltre con il pensiero, si intendeva e si sentiva la pace del nirvana, di quell'annientamento dell'essere, di quella confusione dell'anima umana nell'anima universale, che è il colmo della beatitudine presso i filosofi indiani.
>
> [Peace! Beautiful peace! Divine Peace! It was so easy to feel it in that place. ... One could go beyond it with one's thought, one could perceive and feel the peace of nirvana, the annihilation of being, that reunion of the human soul in the universal soul that is the peak of beatitude among Indian philosophers.] (281)

The nirvanic atmosphere of the world of the Laurentis is the prelude to the restoration of morality and licit romance – the end of illicit desire. But before embarking on the redemptive path, the duke plays his last card and invites Luisa to apply that notion of inspired love to her, that is, to the possible love that Marana may have inspired in her as a result of his courtship. The answer that Luisa provides encapsulates a central question in the novel, that love comes in different gradations, and that we can all love more than one person, but on friendly rather than romantic terms, though the reader is implicitly invited to fantasise that the two dimensions can sometimes blur, thus soliciting curiosity as to whether Luisa felt any romantic or sexual feelings for Marana. Luisa discloses how dear the duke is to her as she tells him about the various gradations of love humans experience, and she states that a great friendship constitutes a gradation of love, which is not to be considered a betrayal of her love for her husband:

> Vi amo un poco, e ve lo confesso. Siete un uomo di valore e non debbo mettervi a mazzo coi più. Già è proprio così... infine, l'amare un uomo e avergli consacrata la vita, non è una ragione per odiare tutti gli altri, o averli in conto di nulla. Ogni sentimento ha le sue gradazioni; o che male ci sarà se ho per voi una grande amicizia.
>
> [I love you a bit and I confess it to you. You are a man of valour and I should not mix you with the lot. It is just like that... ultimately, to love a man and having consecrated your life to him, is not a reason to hate all the others or not to take them into consideration. Every feeling has its gradations: what harm can there be if I feel a great friendship for you?] (293)

The reader knows that Luisa enjoyed some vain moments with the duke, and Luisa admits on more than one occasion, not just in the above remark,

that she was pleased to be courted ('Ecco qui il signor duca di Marana che mi fa la corte. Che male c'è, se egli non mi trova orribile? Abbiamo bisogno qualche volta anche noi di sapere come siamo, e lo specchio non ci basta' [Here is the Duke of Marana who is courting me. Where is the harm if he does not find me horrible? We sometimes need to know how we look like and the mirror is not enough] (297). However, the remark has a redemptive quality as well, since it settles once and for all the question of Marana's courtship of Luisa: through her confession and wisdom, Luisa distances herself from any other possible outcome apart from friendship. She has acknowledged her appreciation of the duke, but she has also put him in his place, spelling out that her life is consecrated to Guido and no one else.

The failure of the treasure hunt, the nightmare, the maxims of Lacmana and Luisa's remarks have all contributed to the redemption of the duke, but it is Guido's reaction to Marana's semi-confession of his love for his wife that seals the redemptive process. The conversation between Guido and his Spanish friend begins with Marana's attempt to rebuke the scholar for his enjoyment of Miss Maud's attentions, only to then move towards Luisa. Marana is about to say that he is in love with her, but Guido stops him:

> Vi debbo una riparazione, Laurenti, e non soltanto pei dubbi di questa mane. Sappiate che ero innamorato di ... Guido non gli diè tempo di finire la frase. Zitto; – gridò egli prontamente; – non turbate il genio dell'amicizia, che non vuol sapere i segreti di nessuno, anche quando gli sembra di averli indovinati.
>
> [I owe you an apology Laurenti, and not only for the doubts of this morning. You should know that I was in love with... Guido did not allow him to complete the sentence. Be silent; – he shouted promptly – please do not disturb the spirit of friendship that does want to know anybody's secrets, even when it believes that it has correctly guessed them.] (300)

Barrili plays on the nobility of Guido's calm and restrained reaction: it is a part of his profile as a saintly being, worthy of the sacrality and mysticism of the India he loves and studies, and of Orientalism as an ethical mission. This nobility is a fundamental aspect that paves the way for the elevation of the Orientalist figure that takes place in the final part of the novel. So while Marana is described by Barrili as 'ingiusto e stravagante' [unfair and eccentric], but above all 'ammalato' [sick] (306), the narrator reflects on

the duke's perception of Guido's noble behaviour: 'Il signor duca pensava … che quell'uomo [Guido] così calmo e sereno valeva più di lui. Quanta forza in quella tranquillità! N'avrebbe avuta altrettanta lui, marito, se uno, anche il suo amico migliore, gli avesse detto senza tanti giri di parole: sono innamorato di vostra moglie!' [The duke thought… that that calm and serene man [Guido] was more valuable than himself. There was such a strength in that tranquillity! Would he have had that same tranquillity, as a husband, if someone, his best friend even, had told him directly: I am in love with your wife!] (305–6).

After the confessions and the duke's recognition of his own corruption, order is restored through Orientalist ethics, and Marana finally settles for marrying Miss Maud. The declaration, as Regis stresses, is the sign that 'the novel's barrier has been surmounted',[13] and in *Il tesoro* it is the pious Laurentis who mediate the duke's declaration to Miss Maud's parents, with the positive outcome and the betrothal that finally yield the novel's happy ending (337). Of the wedding itself, all we are told is that 'il matrimonio era stato celebrato' [the wedding had been celebrated] (339), but Regis confirms that this is often the case, as what really matters at this stage of romance fiction is that 'society has reconstituted itself around the new couple(s) and the community comes together to celebrate this'.[14] This is definitely the case in *Il tesoro*, in which the whole community of Secunderabad, including Guido and Luisa, comes together for the wedding.

The celebration of the Orientalist world of the Laurentis is thus coupled with the culmination of the romance between the hero and the heroine. But Barrili twists the conventions of romance fiction in favour of its Orientalist themes in order to allow the Laurentis to emerge as the real hero and heroine of the novel. This is the other side of the commodity that is being sold in the book: the Laurentis are depicted as the epitome of pure and nirvanic love. Having escaped the tragedy of Luisa's illness in Europe, and having found shelter and peace in India, in that world of spirituality and mysticism, but also of scientific study and secularism, it is the Laurentis who are depicted as experiencing the highest form of union.

13 Regis, *A Natural History*, p. 34.
14 Regis, *A Natural History*, p. 38.

The novel ends with a final image of paradise: the Orientalist scholar and his divine wife ensconced in the nirvanic nest that is their Indian house. They are said to be still thinking about the the small psychological drama that had happened around them and that they themselves had unintentionally caused, but that they had transcended through 'una beatitudine senza confine, non desiderando e non vedendo di più' [a beatitude with no borders, neither desiring nor seeing more] (340). Such is the elevation of the Laurentis' love, Barrili seems to imply. All the sweetness of life pervades the couple as Luisa makes a comparison between their unpleasant past in Europe and their happy present in India: 'Come è dolce la vita! Come è santa questa pace ... Oh dimentichiamo! Le fragranze della tua India sono penetranti e soavi, come sono molesti gli echi della terra donde siamo fuggiti' [How sweet life is! How holy this peace is... Oh, we forget! The fragrances of your India are powerful and sweet, just as the echoes of the land from which we escaped are annoying] (342).

The last words are Luisa's. This is the last opportunity to stress that they could not ask for more from this nirvana, although this is a nirvana for two, which apparently the Indian sages do not consider possible, but which, for the sake of romance fiction and its Italian bourgeois readers, Barrili is keen to depict:

> Felici? Sicuramente. Che cosa potevano chiedere di più? Dimenticati, dimenticare, era il colmo della felicità sulla terra, il nirvana in due, beatitudine non concepita dai sapienti dell'India, che pure hanno concepite tante cose sublimi, ma intesa da tutti coloro che hanno vissuto e sofferto, e che, vivendo volentieri, perchè la vita è bella, chi sappia intenderne le bellezze arcane, non chiedono sorrisi agli uomini, ne inni alla fama, ne tesori a Golconda.
>
> [Happy? Certainly. What more could they ask for? Forget yourself, forget. That was the height of happiness on earth, this nirvana for two, a beatitude not conceived of by the Indian wise men, who have conceived of so many sublime things, but understood by everybody who has lived and suffered and done so willingly, because life is beautiful, for those who can understand the arcane beauties; they do not ask for smiles from men, hymns of fame, nor treasures of Golconda.] (344)

The dream of escape to the Orient is thus provided by Barrili in a most unique and thrilling manner. The conventions of romance fiction are slightly upset in

order for the Laurentis to emerge from the insidious moment of corruption as redeeming and spiritually noble. India is stereotyped as paradise through Hinduism and Buddhism – what Italian Indology had classified as Aryan religions – despite Semitic corruption. Britain, on the other hand, remains the racial and imperial model to which to aspire. The Orientalist commodity that *Il tesoro* represents thus satisfies the promise of desire for adventure and spiritual rebirth, as well as the fantasy of change in the lives of middle-class subjects. For Italian readers, crucially, this was the ultimate rehearsal of their new bourgeois Western identity as modern Europeans.

Carducci's 'Italian Dawn': Aryan mythology, naturalism and realism in 'All'Aurora'

In the poem 'All'Aurora', Giosuè Carducci resorted to the myth of dawn inspired by comparative mythology in order to pay homage to the new Italian 'dawn' of modern national unification. Like Barrili, Carducci was influenced by positivism, and in this poem, he was eager to experiment with the new Orientalist trends as a way of discussing modern Italian national identity through Aryan historicity. In order to do this, Carducci staged an imaginative historical reconstruction of the myth of dawn from its earliest expression in Vedic mythology through to Greek and Roman mythology, and modern Italian realist poetry. His aim was to lend historical and scientific value to his secular use of the Aryan myth as a force of origin, progress and regeneration. While doing so, however, Carducci also engaged with Hegel's phenomenology of Spirit, and fused his Aryan historicity with Hegel's Eurocentric history of the development of consciousness from art and religion to the modern state, in order to celebrate the recent constitution of the Italian State.

The first Italian to receive the Nobel Prize for literature in 1906, Carducci was one of the leading poets of post-unification Italy, and was part of the new bourgeois struggle to create a cultural identity and social structures for the newly constituted nation. The bourgeois class to which

Carducci belonged had taken on the challenge of making the nation, which, despite the efforts of political unification, was broadly characterised by illiteracy, poverty, brigandage and emigration. Writers, intellectuals and artists of Carducci's class, therefore, sought to make their ethical contribution to the resurrection of Italy. They thought Italy's glorious past could provide inspiration for the complex nation-building process, and especially the construction of national consciousness for a now united people that, after centuries of fragmentation and foreign domination, lacked national identity and self-belief. 'All'Aurora' is part of this project: it is a historical journey, I argue, through the myth of the dawn in Vedic, Greek and Roman – Indo-European – mythology, which ends in contemporary Italy, where the poet hopes the ancient light of the Aryan myth will inject energies into the new but struggling nation.

The Roman ideal, Aryan mythology and the 'barbarous metric'

The poem 'All'Aurora' stands out in Carducci's Classicist production for the poet's use of Orientalism and comparative mythology in his engagement with the 'Roman ideal' – the ideal that inspired Italian unification and the notion of political rebirth. Like the Orientalists considered in Chapter 4, Carducci attempted to place Rome and Romanness at the heart of Aryan-European, and of course Italian, evolution from antiquity to modernity. The Roman ideal – for Carducci, a positivist, liberal and anti-Catholic ideal – was first and foremost one of national unity and liberty. As Antonio Piromalli points out, Carducci moved from the Risorgimento ideals associated with 'Mazzinianism' and 'Garibaldinism' – ideals named after Mazzini and Garibaldi, the two most prominent figures of the Risorgimento movement – and anti-clericalism to the defence of the monarchy in the name of Italian unity, but against socialism.[15] The Nobel laureate was an atheist and a vehement critic of the Catholic Church, and like many of his contemporaries, he saw in positivism and secularism two useful tools with which to fight the

15 Antonio Piromalli, *Introduzione a Carducci* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1988), p. 99.

Church's influence in the new Italy. He embraced naturalism and realism as his aesthetic, which he combined with Classicism and an engagement with the Italian tradition, spanning from Dante to more recent authors such as Monti, Parini, Alfieri, Foscolo and Leopardi, all of whom he associated with conceptions of truth in literary representations. Working across influences and trends, in-between late (Neoclassical) Romanticism and early symbolism, Carducci constitutes an idiosyncratic example of poetry-writing. He experimented with what came to be called the 'barbarous meter': a way of composing poetry that attempted to combine the qualitative meter of classical poetry with the accentual meter of Italian poetry. Carducci was adopting the same method used in German poetry in order to renew Italian poetry while celebrating its classical heritage.[16] In 'All'Aurora', however, Carducci also aimed to celebrate Aryan mythology and not solely classical mythology. Carducci in this poem is in dialogue with Hegel's dialectic, as well as with Indologist Michele Kerbaker and Classicist Gaetano Trezza, as he develops his imaginative historical reconstruction of the myth of dawn from Vedic times to modern Italy, in conjunction with his Roman ideal.

Carducci's major Classicist work, *Odi barbare* (1877), a later edition of which contains 'All'Aurora', is representative of his worldview and aspirations regarding the use of the Roman ideal, his experimentations with meter, as well as his concern with history, especially as a way of gathering what Trezza calls 'la somma dell'energie storiche del passato' [the sum of the historical energies of the past], which are 'la promessa più certa dell' avvenire poetico' [the most certain promise of a poetical future].[17] This collection was published in several editions, including *Nuove odi barbare* (1882 and 1886), *Terze odi barbare* (1889) and *Delle odi barbare 'lettura'* (1893). Although 'All'Aurora' first appeared in the collection *Fanfulla della Domenica* (1881), it was part of the second edition, *Nuove odi barbare*. Generally speaking, in this work, Carducci's position is associated with a democratism and humanitarianism of French derivation, as well as with a nationalist rhetoric that considers the reality of modern Italian

16 Franco Robecchi, *Carducci poeta barbaro* (Milan: IULM, 1981).

17 Gaetano Trezza, *Nuovi studi critici* (Verona and Padua: Drucker & Tedeschi, 1881), pp. 66–7.

decadence and stagnation, and consequently invites renewal.[18] In the *Odi barbare*, Piromalli points out, Carducci intended to achieve new artistic heights which for the poet corresponded to the heights of dignity of a nation 'che specificamente derivava nobiltà e tradizione dal mondo di Roma antica' [which specifically derived nobility and tradition from the world of ancient Rome].[19] As Benedetto Croce stressed, Carducci fused this concern for historical culture with political passion (historical themes include ancient Rome, the early modern city-states, the French Revolution and the Risorgimento) in order to produce his historical and epic poetry.[20] Indeed, 'All'Aurora' is a peculiar and unique example of this historical poetry as it focuses on Aryan historicity and the path to self-realisation. Carducci's contribution consisted in the creation of poetry that would function as a mirror to the political and cultural transformation and modernisation of Italy, but the liberalisation of such poetry also involved an awareness of the concerns of the market and the publishing world, especially in relation to modern Italy's stagnant Classicism. As Stefano Pavarini explains with particular regard to Carducci's devising of a new Italian metric and its 'right' to rhythmic freedom,

> la strategia di riutilizzazione dell'antico presuppone ormai l'acuta consapevolezza della morte dell'arte e dell'estetica classiciste, di fronte al predominio delle logiche economiche del mercato e della produzione editoriale, con la seguente mercificazione dell'opera d'arte.
>
> [the strategy of reusing the ancient assumes, by now, the acute awareness of the death of Classicist art and aesthetics, in the face of the dominance of the economic logics of the market and editorial production, with the subsequent commodification of the work of art.][21]

It is therefore not surprising that Carducci, in his attempt to innovate and 'liberate' Italian poetry, also experimented with one of the popular

18 Piromalli, *Introduzione a Carducci*, p. 100.
19 Piromalli, *Introduzione a Carducci*, p. 107.
20 Benedetto Croce, 'Le varie tendenze e armonie e disarmonie di Giosue Carducci', in *Giosue Carducci. Studio Critico* (Bari: Laterza, 1961 [1920]), pp. 56–67.
21 Stefano Pavarini, *Carducci* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2003), p. 45.

trends of the time – Orientalism – in vogue in Italy in the 1870s, and already an established genre in the literary market everywhere in Europe. Moreover, in stylistic terms, Carducci was primarily concerned with the extinction of rhymes in the name of a freedom of metric which would allow the poet to combine poetic and political freedom. The product would be a metrical revolution which would give way not only to the so-called barbarous metric (*metrica barbara*) of Carducci, but also to the pioneering avant-garde practice of Gian Pietro Lucini's 'freeverse' (*versoliberismo*).[22]

Even more importantly, Carducci was particularly concerned with the idea of the personification and humanisation of phenomena in the Greek Golden Age – and in this case of the myth of dawn. As already seen with Trezza in Chapter 5, in Hegel's phenomenology, anthropomorphism marks a major revolution in the idea of beauty in art, and a step forward towards the realisation of consciousness, freedom and knowledge. The personification of dawn, which Carducci shows in the poem to take place with the Greeks, and become the womanly Aurora in Rome and modern Italy, is Carducci's leitmotif in 'All'Aurora'. Indeed, in this contex, Carducci establishes a link with Leopardi's 'All'Italia', where Risorgimento Italy is seen by the poet as a woman. In order to better grasp the various stages that Carducci reconstructs in his development of dawn from the undefined shapes of the Vedic dawn to the womanly shape of the Italian dawn, as a rebirth of the Roman *Aurora*, it is useful to consider the four civilisational stages of (Indo-European) history conceived by Hegel in relation to the development of the Spirit: the Orient (i.e. India), Greece, Rome and Germany. As Nicholas Germana has argued, in fact, Hegel

> traces the history of the Spirit's self-realization from art to religion and the modern state. Each of these stages represents a moment in the development of Spirit: the Orient is the stage in which 'individuality is absorbed in its essence and its claims are not explicitly recognised'; in Greece, Spirit achieves 'ethical individuality as beauty'; in the Roman world there is a deepening of a sense of individuality to the point

22 Pavarini, *Carducci*, p. 47.

> where it 'reaches abstract universality and therefore infinite opposition to the objective world'; and finally, in the German world Spirit 'receives in its inner life its truth and concrete essence, while in objectivity it is at home and reconciled with itself.'[23]

'All'Aurora' is indeed made up of four main parts: first, the 'animation', or, better, the 'awakening', of nature and the emergence of light – a symbol of (scientific) illumination for the Italian rebirth – in the play between the Vedic dawn Usha, and the Vedic sun, Suria; second, a switch from India and the Vedic Usha to Mount Hymettus in Greece and Eos, the Greek goddess of the dawn, where the myth begins to take on human shapes, paving the ground for its later transformation into a woman as a symbol of reborn Italy; third, a further switch from the young Greek world to the modern world of Italy, which is depicted as tired and oppressed; and fourth, the final encounter between the personification of the Roman *Aurora* as a woman, and the poet, in whose encounter the poet asks the Roman dawn to take him high into the sky, so that he can see his own woman, Italy, illuminated by the rising sun, as a symbol of the modern Italian *Aurora*. As for Hegel's four stages, therefore, Carducci's four stages span India, Greece, Rome and Italy.

In his 'Saggio d'Inni Vedici', Kerbaker specifically comments on the question of humanisation of myths with reference to the Vedic and the Greek dawns. He explains that humanisation in the Vedas is a 'fantasmagoria momentanea' [temporary phantasmagoria] as the image of the divinity is 'soltanto abbozzata' [only sketched] as it continuously changes between human and non-human forms. As a result, it would be absurd to seek in the Vedic deities the wonderful figures of the Hellenic pantheon.[24] It is on these wonderful figures that Carducci focuses in his poem, to the exent that the Vedic dawn, after becoming a beautiful figure with the Greek dawn, becomes the Latin *Aurora*, with whom the poet enters a dialogue and to whom he asks to illuminate Italy, which in turn becomes the poet's own woman and fully human.

The importance of humanisation in relation to Italian renewal can be best understood by making a link between 'All'Aurora' and Leopardi's

23 Germana, *The Anxiety of Autonomy*, p. 170.

24 Michele Kerbaker, 'Saggio d'Inni Vedici', *Giornale napoletano di filosofia e lettere, scienze morali e politiche*, n. 1 (1879), p. 64.

'All'Italia'. Carducci's poem is a hymn to Italian rebirth, on the model of Leopardi's 'All'Italia', in which Leopardi sings about the miserable conditions of decadence and oppression of Risorgimento Italy, while addressing it as a voluptuous woman due to the memory of 'her' former glory and eternal beauty. The emphasis on anthropomorphism in 'All'Aurora' is central in tracing a symbolical link between the tradition of anthropomorphism in Classicism, discussed at length by Orientalism, as already seen in the Classicist-Romantic quarrel, and Leopardi's representation of Italy as a woman that in modern times resembles more a handmaiden. Leopardi sings of past Italian glory and contemporary modern decadence thus:

> Formosissima donna! Io chiedo al cielo/ E al mondo: dite dite: / Che la ridusse a tale? E questo è peggio. / Che di catene ha carche ambe le braccia; / Si che sparte le chiome e senza velo / Siede in terra negletta e sconsolata, / Nascondendo la faccia / Tra le ginocchia, e piange. Piangi, che ben hai donde, Italia mia, / Le genti a vincer nata / E nella fausta sorte e nella ria. / Se fosser gli occhi tuoi due fonti vive / Mai non potrebbe il pianto / Adeguarsi al tuo danno ed allo scorno; / Che fosti donna, or sei povera ancella. / Chi di te parla o scrive, / Che, rimembrando il tuo passato vanto, / Non dica: già fu grande, or non è quella? / Perchè perchè? / Dov'è la forza antica, / Dove l'armi e il valore e la costanza?
>
> [Beautiful lady, / this is how you look! I ask heaven and earth / to tell me, Who did this to her? / And, worse, her arms / are bound with chains; / hair undone, without her veil, / she sits alone and hopeless on the ground, / her face between her knees, / and weeps. / Weep; for you have reason to, my Italy, / born to outdo others / in both happiness and misery. / Even if your eyes were fountains, / your tears could never equal / your suffering and humiliation; / you were a lady, and now you are a slave. / Whoever speaks or writes about you, who, remembering you in your pride, / wouldn't say: She was great once; but no longer? / Why? What happened to our ancient strength, / the arms, the courage, the resolve?][25]

Like Leopardi, Carducci is interested in the truth of the Italian condition, and so he too represents the newly constituted nation as a womenly Aryan *Aurora* battling against decadence and subordination. Thus, the poem seeks to celebrate the ideal on which Italy has been founded, the Roman ideal, in its Aryan historical context, and is more optimistic of Leopardi's poem in

25 Leopardi, 'All'Italia' ['To Italy'], in *Canti*, pp. 2–5.

the light of achieved nationhood. Before proceeding with a close reading of the poem to illustrate this process of humanisation of the myth of the dawn through Aryan historicity (as the Italian path to consciousness, nationhood and statehood), it is important to dwell a little more on the significance of Vedism, especially in conjunction with Hellenism, as a positivist tool.

Vedism and Hellenism: Origins, science and realism

As Maurizio Taddei and other critics such as Demetrio Ferrari indicate, Carducci himself revealed that he drew inspiration for 'All'Aurora' from Kerbaker's translation of the Vedic 'Hymn to the Dawn' and two essays on the *Rig-Veda* the Indologist published in 1879 in a Neapolitan journal.[26] However, other critics, such as Maggi and Taddei, have debated in more detail the influences on Carducci's poem, and while both agree that there is epistolary evidence that Carducci had already conceived of the poem in 1877, two years before Kerbaker's publication, Taddei believes that Carducci became familiar with the Vedic myth through the already-mentioned writings by De Gubernatis on the *Vedic Hymns*, whereas Maggi believes that it was the work of Max Müller on the science of religion that proved influential.[27] While there is no definitive solution to this problem, the debate on Carducci's possible influences and sources is a further demonstration of the popularity of Orientalist ideas in the Italian positivist culture of the post-unification period. In line with the Aryanist rhetoric of Italian Orientalists and Classicists, Carducci aimed to explore the mythological significance of the symbol of dawn as the

26 See Kerbaker, 'Saggio d'Inni Vedici'; Maurizio Taddei, 'Sulla ispirazione indiana dell'Aurora di Giosuè Carducci', in *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, vol ii, pp. 69–86; and Daniele Maggi, 'Ancora su Carducci, Max Müller, De Gubernatis', in *Angelo De Gubernatis*, pp. 87–114. See also Demetrio Ferrari, *Saggio di interpretazione delle* Odi barbare (Cremona: Fezzi, 1912), pp. 23–4. It is also important to say that Ferrari identifies several homages and references to Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Monti and Foscolo in particular in the tradition of Italian letters (besides, that is, the Greek and Roman).

27 Maggi, 'Ancora su Carducci, Max Müller, De Gubernatis', p. 96.

ultimate sign of origins, light and awakening. As Kerbaker wrote in 1879, in the same journal in which his Italian translation of the 'Hymn to the Dawn' first appeared (possibly the translation Carducci used for the composition of his poem 'All'Aurora'), the myth of the Vedic dawn has a 'grandezza ideale straordinaria' [extraordinary ideal greatness] as 'dea della giovinezza eterna, la dea che assiste al nascimento ed al tramonto degli altri dei, la dea madre per eccellenza' [goddess of eternal youth, the goddess who witnesses the birth and the twilight of the other gods, the mother goddess *par excellence*].[28] This is the greatest quality of the Vedic dawn – it is eternal youth, the origin of origins, and the mother of all gods and living things (human and non-human). As we will see, by placing the Vedic dawn next to Eos, the Greek myth of the dawn, and then the Aurora, the Latin and Italian myth, Carducci not only engaged with Eurocentric narratives of Indo-European progressive history, but he also lent greater value to the elements of origin and evolution which, in these narratives, are markers of Aryan progress, making the ground fertile for the imaginative rebirth of the Roman ideal.

In this Orientalist ideological framework, the Roman ideal is an Aryan ideal that has its roots in the Vedic ideal. Kerbaker explains that the Vedic dawn is a naturalistic observation and representation of the phenomenal world – after all 'Veda' means science in Sanskrit, Kerbaker is keen to stress – and so is identified with a fantastic scheme which 'coll'attenta osservazione del mondo esterno ... si para innanzi come l'ordine universale delle cose' [through the careful observation of the external world ... shows the universal order of things].[29] Kerbaker sums up the qualities of the Vedic dawn and its relationship with 'truth' and the 'real' through illusions thus: 'Nella bellissima figura dell'aurora riconosce e idoleggia le proprietà caratteristiche del genio femminile, il senso immediato e sicuro della realtà, l'armonia delle facoltà individuali, la gioventù eterna dell'anima e la naturale attitudine alle belle e piacevoli illusioni' [In the beautiful figure of the dawn, the typical characteristics of the female genius are recognised

28 Michele Kerbaker, 'La poesia del Rig-veda', in *Giornale napoletano di filosofia e lettere, scienze morali e politiche*, vol. 1 (Naples: Perrotti, 1879), pp. 56–93 (81).

29 Kerbaker, 'La poesia del Rig-veda', p. 57.

and idealised, along with the immediate and certain sense of reality, the harmony of the individual's capabilities, the soul's eternal youth, and the natural attitude towards beautiful and pleasant illusions].[30]

This sense of reality – that is, of scientific truth and naturalist phenomenology – is reinforced by the role of Classicism in Aryan historicity. Trezza, another figure close to Carducci and the Florentine positivist circles, when referring to the essay on and the translation of the Vedic hymn by Kerbaker, explains the relevance of the hymn in the universe of comparative mythology. In *Nuovi studi critici* (1881), Trezza emphasises the evolutionary formation of the myth of the dawn, and sees the dawn of the *Vedic Hymns* as the earliest formation of the same myth of Aphrodite in Greek mythology and Venus in Latin mythology. He speaks of the same poetic intuition, which illuminates certain aspects of history that would even escape science, but that thanks to comparative mythology can reveal the evolution of Aryan deities:

> Lo studio scientifico dei miti si riduce ad una morfologia, e ne sono appunto le forme storiche che bisogna investigare ed intendere; cioè come nel panteismo rude ed inconscio delle schiatte indo-europee, si dispiccarono le forme più o meno organiche degli Dei.
>
> [The scientific study of myths comes down to morphology, and one must investigate and understand the shape of that historical evolution; that is, how the more or less organic shapes of gods were created in the rough and unconscious pantheism of the Indo-European races.][31]

Once the philological links within the Aryan tradition of mythology are established, Trezza stresses the importance of using this historical heritage, whether Indian or classical, in a realist and scientific way that is concerned with the modern present rather than the past, and that may function in a revolutionary way. Especially Classicism, for Trezza, is revolutionary in a typically positivist and anti-theological way, and embodies the idea of rebirth, be it poetic, scientific or of the ideal:

30 Kerbaker, 'La poesia del Rig-veda', p. 92.
31 Trezza, *Nuovi studi critici*, pp. 234–5.

> La protesta ribelle della ragione liberata dal concetto teologico del mondo, non è altro che l'ellenismo stesso continuato e compiuto nel cervello moderno. Non è il politeismo pagano, non sono i suoi dei che vogliamo risuscitare al sepolcro. Que dei, eroi epopee drammi cori non ritorneranno alla vita moderna perche l'evoluzione storica li ha oltrepassati per sempre … in questo realismo s'annidano i semi fecondi d'un rinnovamento poetico; è il concetto scientifico del reale da cui dee rampollare un ideale più efficace e più vasto.
>
> [The rebellious protest of reason freed from the theological concept of the world is nothing other than the continuation and completion of Hellenism itself in the modern brain. It is not pagan polytheism, they are not the gods that we want to raise from the dead. Those gods, heroes, epics, dramas, choruses will not come back to modern life because historical evolution has trascended them forever … in this realism, the fruitful seeds of a poetic renewal take root; it is from the scientific concept of reality that a more effective and broader ideal must germinate.][32]

For modern Hellenism, Trezza thus means an anti-theological, positivist realism necessary for a modern poetic renewal – not a classical emulation in a Neoclassical sense, but a revolutionary attitude of renewal through science and realism and a rejection of metaphysics. Trezza's considerations are not only relevant as he locates such classical revolution in the context of Aryan historicity, but also because he considers Carducci 'come il rappresentante maggiore del realismo contemporaneo nell'arte' [the major representative of contemporary realism in art], and his Classicism is a 'creazione vivente risuscitata nel sentimento moderno' [resuscitated creativity coupled with modern sensibility].[33] Orientalism, Classicism, Aryan historicity and the Italian positivist context are indeed all called upon by Carducci to consider the reality of Italy, to use the historical heritage for a greater engagement with truth rather than stylistic formulas; to look at modern Italy in all its past splendour and difficult modernity, as a way of calling upon its self-realised consciousness, or modern light.

32 Trezza, *Nuovi studi critici*, pp. 64–5.
33 Trezza, *Nuovi studi critici*, p. 71–2.

The Aryan-Italian dawn

A close reading of the poem will illustrate how Carducci developed a symbolical and poetic rendition of the Aryan-Italian dawn. The first part of the poem is particularly important in relation to the sketchy representation of the dawn as an abstract figure undetached from non-human nature. It is the awakening of nature and life, it is the creation of all things, including the divine world, it is the creator of all gods and goddesses. Although the dawn has female features, it is depicted as an unfinished figure and certainly not fully human. Dawn is given divine and naturalistic connotations and illuminates everything with its rosy and purple colours through an imagery of awakening based on naturalist phenomenology. Carducci addresses it as a rising 'dea' [goddess] (1) with a 'roseo fiato' [rosy breath] – also a reference to Virgil's 'roseis fulgebat' in *The Aeneid*[34] – that kisses the hazy mountain peaks and rosy clouds. The realism of the high peaks is rendered with images of the 'gelido fremito' [icy quiver] of the wood and the 'rapace gioia' [rapacious joy] of the flight of the hawk. Nests come to life and the dove's cries are depicted as the background to the 'violaceo mare' [purple sea]. Poplars murmur and, among them, shining rivers 's'allegrano' [become cheerful]. Horses neigh 'a'venti' [to the winds] and the whole valley 'suona' [sounds] with the moos of cows. From the undefined divine-natural environment, the poem then moves to the human dimension as 'l'uom' [man] is awakened by the ancient, youthful dawn and admires it, in the same way as the dawn was admired, among the herds by the noble Aryan fathers – a reference to Leopardi's shepherd in the 'Canto notturno', as a number of critics have argued, here the dawn replaces Leopardi's moon: 'Ma l'uom che tu svegli a oprar consumando la vita, / te giovinetta antica, te giovinetta eterna / ancor pensoso ammira, come già t'adoravan su'l monte / ritti fra i bianchi armenti i nobili Aria padri' [But the man that you wake up to go working, consuming his life, / you ancient young woman, you eternal young woman, / he, still pensive, admires you, as you have already been admired on the mountain / by the noble Aryan fathers standing among

34 Ferrari, *Saggio di interpretazione*, p. 24.

their white flocks] (13–16).[35] Carducci thus establishes a parallel between Leopardi's Asian plateaux and shepherd, and his own Indian plateaux of the Vedic shepherd, perhaps hinting that Leopardi, too, had this Vedic poetic image in mind when he crafted his poem 'Canto nutturno' (see Chapter 3).

The human sketchy quality of the myth of the dawn takes now the connotations of the shepherd who guides the red cows and the blonde horses of the Asvini brothers – the Vedic horses – into the sky.[36] Another example of a sketchy anthropomorphism is the simile whereby Carducci likens the encounter between the dawn and the sun to that between a woman and a man. Carducci addresses the dawn as the 'giovane donna che va da i lavacri a lo sposo / riflettendo ne gli occhi il desiato amore' [young woman who goes from the basin to her groom / reflecting in her eyes the desired love] (23–4). Again, the sketchy nature of the dawn is achieved through the vague female figure undetached from the natural environment, who is portrayed as if letting her clothes fall down and serenely showing her forms to the skies: 'tu sorridendo lasci caderti i veli leggiadri / a le virginee forme scuopri serena i cieli' [you, smiling, let your elegant veils fall down / and uncover the virgin shapes to the skies] (25–6). This depiction culminates in the love encounter between the dawn and the sun, the 'sovran dei mondi' [sovereign of the worlds], the 'bel fiammante Suria' [beautiful shiny Surya] (28). The dawn, not yet a fully human figure and constantly changing is depicted as reaching out for the sun with her 'rosee braccia' [rosy arms] (29). However, because of the sun's brightness, the dawn is compelled to run away and is rescued by the Asvini twins, the 'cavalieri del cielo' [knights of the sky] (31), who take the 'rosea tremante' [shivering pink] (32) dawn on their golden chariot and head towards the 'mister de la sera' [the twilight] (34).

The first turning point, and a (Eurocentric) revolutionary moment in the development of consciousness and individuality through anthropomorphism, occurs when the Vedic dawn changes clothing and turns into the human Greek dawn. The setting of the poem moves from the 'plaghe d'oriente' [regions of the East] (37), where, 'in mezzo a'vitelli danzando

35 Giosuè Carducci, 'All'Aurora', in Manara Valgimigli, ed., *Odi Barbare. Testimonianze, interpretazione, commento* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1959), p. 13.

36 Valgimigli, 'All'Aurora', p. 14, n. 19–26.

con floride chiome' [in the midst of calves dancing with florid hair], the dawn takes on a new shape, the 'pastorella del cielo' [shepherdess of the sky] (40), to look after all creatures. The poet expresses the benevolent and caring omnipotence of the Vedic dawn by having her arrive with fortune, 'fiorenti biade' [blooming fodders] and 'spumante latte' [sparkling milk] (38), as 'cantavano gli Aria' [the Aryans were singing] (41). The setting moves to the Hymettus, in Greece, because, the poet confesses, 'mi piacqueti meglio' [I liked you better], due to its much more familiar 'fresco di venti rivi, che al ciel di timi odora' [fresh wind that smells of thyme in the sky] (42). Carducci switches to a set of classical references, familiar to Italian readers. He narrates the encounter between the Greek goddess of dawn and the hunter Cephalus, here mediated by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the awakening of nature at dawn is described by means of a mortal love affair between Eos and Cephalus, when the goddess of dawn descends to win the love of young hunters: 'piacquerti su l'Imetto i lesti cacciatori mortali / prementi le rugiade co'l coturnato piede' [on the Hymettus you liked the fast mortal hunters / pressing the dews with booted feet] (43–4). The image of the dawn taken from Greek mythology has a more personified dimension, as it is an act of love between two human figures that creates the 'giovinetto mondo' [young world] (56), which can be understood as a new stage in art and thought, and a new phase towards consciousness, self-realisation and the Italian dawn.

However, the contemporary situation of the Italian dawn of unification is described no longer through mythological naturalism but through social realism. Carducci brings the Greek dawn to the contemporary city, where 'she' is about to take on a new shape, and asks her if she is still able to love, and illuminate life. For Carducci, as for Leopardi, modern decadence refers both to Italy and to poetry, even though Carducci had a more positive attitude towards science. Hence, in the modern world depicted here, there is little light, and we hear of the reality of post-unification Italy through the hardship of a worker who curses servitude: 'Languon fiochi i fanali; rincasa, e né meno ti guarda, / una pallida torma che si credè di gioire. / Sbatte l'operaio rabbioso le stridule imposte, / e maledice il giorno che rimena il servaggio' [The lights languish dimly; the worker returns home and does not look at you, / a pale crowd that believes iself joyful / The angry worker

slams the squeaky shutters / and curses the day that brings back servitude] (62). Modern life – and Carducci is clearly speaking of modern life in the new Italy – is still characterised by gloom, servitude and subordination.

Once established the truth of contemporary unified Italy, Carducci returns to mythology, this time Roman mythology, to express his auspices that the Roman *Aurora* may provide inspiration for the struggling Italy. With the representation of *Aurora*, personification reaches its climax, as the Latin dawn is no longer a goddess, but just a 'donna' [woman] (64) who commits to a 'amante' [lover] (63). The lover is the poet himself who, in turn, asks *Aurora* to take him 'su'l tuo corsier di fiamma' [on your horse of flame] (66), to a new light from which he can see 'la terra tutta risorridente nel roseo lume tuo' [the earth all smiling again in your rosy light] (67–8). It is important to stress the word 'risorridente' [smiling again], which evokes the idea of rebirth. In the last two lines, Carducci addresses Italy, which he calls 'la mia donna' [my woman] (69), and which he is now able to see, 'davanti al sole che leva / sparsa le nere trecce giù pe'l rorido seno' [in front of the sun that rises / with her loose black plaits on her prosperous breast] (70), that is, illuminated by the light of the rising sun which, the poet hopes, will make all the beauty of dewy Italy, the imagined awakened Italy, shine once again.

In a letter to his wife, as Carducci discussed his interest in comparative mythology, he said that Greek mythology was not enough for this poem, and playfully announced to her: 'mi preparo a mettervene dell'indiana e Vedica' [and I prepare myself to put in some Indian and Vedic mythology].[37] Carducci's poetic engagement with the mythological framework inspired by Indology is, of course, an experiment in poetry. However, the way he is able to discuss notions of origin, evolution and decline in relation to Italy and within the Aryan mythological framework, is telling of Carducci's poetic use of the links between Orientalism and discourses of racial identity, historical progress and nationalism in post-unification Italy.

37 Carducci, 'Letter to Lidia', 22 October 1876, in Valgimigli, p. 11.

CHAPTER 7

Guido Gozzano's *Verso la cuna del mondo*: Modernism, Existentialism and British India

Guido Gozzano's *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914* (1917) constitutes another prime example of how the trope of India came to play a role in the practice of Italian literary Orientalism in the early part of the twentieth century. As with Barrili and Carducci, I am interested in how Gozzano borrowed from the world of Indology and Aryanism in order to stage the Orientalist 'drama' of the European man that returns to his Indian cradle. Aryan philology, mythology and racialism, coupled with Indian spirituality and British imperialism – the popular themes associated with Indic Orientalism – are also the themes of Gozzano's Indian 'letters'. Gozzano allegedly wrote them during his journey to India, and the posthumous collection remains to this day a fine example of both twentieth-century Italian travel writing and highly aestheticised modernist and existentialist prose. However, unlike the texts by Barrili and Carducci, who were influenced by positivism and historicism, Gozzano's Indian letters reflect the decline of naturalist and realist aesthetics, and the emergence of an anti-realist oneiric aesthetic inspired by a scepticism towards historicism and positivism. In order to explore this anti-realist aesthetic, I aim to put *Verso la cuna* in dialogue with Angelo De Gubernatis' travel writing *Peregrinazioni indiane* – one of Gozzano's sources for his letters – as a way to discuss Gozzano's aestheticisation of the historicist knowledge produced by the scholar's Indological work on India. I look at how Gozzano renders De Gubernatis' depiction of India in a more playful, ironic, but also pessimistic and 'hallucinatory' way, as a reflection of

his *crepuscular* aesthetic.[1] While Gozzano's 'Indian unconscious' has anti-positivist and anti-historicist connotations, however, it emerged out of historicist *as well as* anti-historicist contexts of Indic Orientalism. As a way to map these varied contexts on which Gozzano was keen to put his own stamp, I begin my discussion with a brief survey of figures influenced by the new idealist cimate of Orientalism, such as Giovanni Papini, Roberto Assagioli and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, before moving on to see how Gozzano aestheticised De Gubernatis' positivist source.

Idealism and a new Aryan humanism: Papini, Assagioli and Marinetti

As we have already seen in Chapter 5 in the context of Indology and *orientalistica*, from the turn of the century and the first decades of the twentieth century, a revival of idealism and spiritual trends resulted in the development of new views and perspectives on Aryanism. Giovanni Papini and Giovanni Prezzolini were two prominent intellectual figures in early twentieth-century Italy, who became leading voices in the rebirth of idealism also through the revival of the Vedas and Buddhism. Their work, in turn, echoed the appropriations of the same trends by the leader of the futurist movement and one of the pioneers of the literary avante-garde, Filippo Tommaso Marinetti. Marinetti's futurist Orientalism emerged, among other things, in conjunction with scientific and theosophical thought, and through the merging of Aryan as well as Islamic humanism with African primitivism and Western technology.

Indeed, the new idealist trends in Italy developed in tandem with theosophy and other mystical and spiritual trends inspired by Indic

1 Gozzano was the major exponent of the literary movement of '*crepuscolarismo*', a movement whose philosophy was in line with the decline of positivism, historicism and realism, and the emergence of forms of neo-idealism and neo-Romanticism, and anti-realist aesthetics. The term '*crepuscolare*' was intended to refer to the 'twighlight of history', or the conception that the nineteenth-century notion of 'history as progress' was beginning to be seen with scepticism, and Europe was feared to have entered a process of degeneration.

Orientalism. Figures such as Papini and Prezzolini founded journals like *Leonardo* and *La voce*, through which the new ideas on theosophy and mysticism were disseminated. They were also in close contact with the Italian Theosophical Society, founded by Arturo Reghini in 1895, and the *Biblioteca filosofica*, both based in Florence, where lectures, seminars and the dissemination of the new ideas and works would take place. In *Leonardo*, for instance, Papini gives a clear account of the new cultural and intellectual events which signalled the twilight of positivism and materialism and the rebirth of spiritualism:

> Da qualche anno in Italia, l'aria spirituale è cambiata. Si sente parlare di rinascite dell'idealismo e dello spiritualismo, di neo-idealismi e di nuovi spiritualismi, di risveglio mistico, di ricomparsa della fede, di avvento del regno dello spirito e dell'Uomo-Dio, del trionfo della vita interna, del valore e del dominio dello spirito e soprattutto si odono i funebri annunzi del 'tramonto del positivismo' e della 'morte del materialismo'. ... La formazione di varie società per le ricerche psichiche; il ripetersi sempre più frequente di clamorose sedute medianiche; la diffusione, alcuni anni fa abbastanza grande, della Società Teosofica; la fondazione e lo sviluppo della *Biblioteca Filosofica* di Firenze ...; l'apparizione pure a Firenze, di una chiesa italiana della *Christian Science*; il tentativo di una colonia mistica e tolstoiana fatto alcuni anni fa presso Roma .... Questa noiosa enumerazione dà, credo, un'idea della vastità della rivoluzione intellettuale che si va compiendo in Italia.
>
> [During the past few years, spirituality in Italy has been changing. We hear talk of the rebirth of idealism and spiritualism, of a mystic reawakening, of a reappearance of faith, of the advent of the spirit's reign and of the Man-God, of the triumph of inner life, of the value and dominion of spirit and above all we hear funerary announcements about the decline of positivism and the death of materialism .... The formation of several societies for psychic research, the rise of clamorous paranormal gatherings; the spreading, some years ago, of the Theosophical Society; the foundation and the development of the *Philosophical Library* in Florence ...; the appearance in Florence of an Italian church of *Christian Science*; the attempt to found a mystic and Tolstoyan colony formed some years ago in Rome .... This boring enumeration gives, I think, an idea of the vastness of the intellectual revolution which is taking place in Italy.][2]

2 Papini, 'Franche spiegazioni', p. 139.

Academic Orientalists and Indologists, such as Paolo Pavolini and Carlo Formichi, gave lectures on Oriental cultures and religions at the *Biblioteca Filosofica*[3] and published essays and translations in journals such as *Leonardo*. These Orientalists were influenced by the new wave of idealism, but, in turn, they also made a substantial contribution to it, and influenced public commentators and intellectual figures who, in turn, popularised Orientalist ideas and themes.

Giovanni Papini, for example, in an article entitled 'Verso il Buddha Siddharta', which he signed with his pseudonym 'Gianfalco', writes of the increasing interest in Buddhism in Italy and mentions Orientalist figures such as Carlo Puini, as well as popularisers of Buddhism such as Alessandro Costa, in order to claim that Buddhism could be considered the antidote to the contemporary wave of irreligiosity in Italy. He discusses the ways in which Buddhism, despite what some claim, is neither a speculative nor a pessimistic religion. On the contrary, for him, Buddha proved deeper 'di quei semiti che ci diedero il cristianesimo' [than those Semites that gave us Christianity], because he did not promise to the faithful 'un paradiso qualunque' [a kind of paradise], but 'uno stato superiore, che trascende la stessa esistenza, il nirvana' [a superior state that transcends existence, nirvana]. Papini, however, warns that this is not a state of absolute peace, as many would have it, nor is it absolute nihilism, as others might see it. As he puts it, 'È qualcosa che supera l'essere e il non-essere, uno stato di esistenza assolutamente diversa ... ma a questo stato superiore i fedeli di Buddha salgono attraverso più gradi di santità, che sono già di per se qualcosa d'infinitamente più dolce della vita comune divorata dal desiderio' [It is something that goes beyond being and non-being. It is an absolutely different state of existence ... but Buddha's followers achieve this state by rising to varying degrees of sanctity, which are already infinitely sweeter than a common life devoured by desire].[4] Thus, Gianfalco is able to conclude that Buddhism is an optimistic and utilitarian religion that opens

3 See, for example, my discussion in Chapter 5 of Belloni-Filippi and Formichi's *Il pensiero religioso in India*, published by the *Biblioteca Filosofica* in 1912.

4 Giovanni Papini, 'Verso il Buddha Siddarta', in *Leonardo*, year 1, January 1903, number 3, p. 2.

doors to the individual's inner faculties, being, and spirit, while referring to the ultimate state of being as awake and alert.

Even more crucially, Roberto Assagioli, in his piece 'Per un nuovo umanesimo ariano' (1907), published in *Leonardo*, addresses the signs in Western culture of an idealist re-awakening, and claims that Indian culture is the most apt to satisfy these needs. Assagioli acknowledges the insufficient 'spiegazione meccanica dell'universo' [mechanical explanation of the universe], and considers as unsatisfactory the explanation of the highest problems 'per mezzo della sola speculazione razionalistica' [by means of mere rationalistic speculation]. He thus calls for new conceptions of the universe which would show the limits of such rationalistic speculations through the recognition that phenomena are mysterious: 'il primo passo per svelare un mistero è il riconoscere umilmente che esso esiste' [the first step to unravel a mystery is to humbly recognise that it exists].[5] So instead of focusing on outer or external material and mechanical progress, Assagioli invites more attention to inner life and needs, necessary for a true fulfilment. He calls for a moral renewal, for which classical humanism and indeed Christianisty are no longer adequate, and points to India and the new Aryan humanism as necessary for the cultivation of the inner being, through Buddhism and the philosophy of the *Upanishad*. The nirvana and Atman, much more apt than contemporary psychology, are the doctrines suitable for the achievement of such moral renewal and the highest state of consciousness. Assagioli concludes that Indian spirituality is therefore essential to counter Western materialism, individualism and selfishness. He juxtaposes the respective positions of the two great civilisations, the 'europea contemporanea ed Indiana antica' [contemporary European and ancient Indian], in order to demonstrate 'quanto sarebbe fecondo, importante, magnifico un umanesimo ariano, non sterile imitazione di vecchi modelli, ma intima fusione dei più alti prodotti … di due gloriose civiltà millenarie' [how fruitful, important and magnificent an Aryan humanism would be, not a sterile imitation of old models, but an intimate fusion of the highest

5 Roberto Assagioli, 'Per un nuovo umanesimo ariano', in *Leonardo*, year v, 3rd series, April-June 1907, pp. 162–82 (170–2).

products ... of two glorious millenary civilisations].[6] Assagioli's notion of a new Aryan humanism, based on the fusion of ancient India and modern Europe, is obviously a new incarnation of the Indo-European theory from an anti-positivistic and idealist point of view.

Similarly, in Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna* (1909) – the second manifesto of futurism, though the first to be published in Italian – India, the Indian plateaux and the Indian Ocean play a central role in the processes of destruction and creation that give birth to futurism. Assagioli's Aryan humanism with Marinetti takes on a new shape through the imagery of a harmonious fusion between ancient India and modern Europe. Such fusion is articulated through the imagery of the destruction of the past which led to European peak and decadence, and the creation of a new, global futurism where East and West merge. As for the founding manifesto of futurism, the aim here is to attack tradition, especially the tradition of the Italian Renaissance and Classicism, but also Christianity, which are considered responsible for Italian stagnation, as well as European decadence. Marinetti devises an anti-realist, ahistorical, avant-garde mythology that borrows from many sources, including the Vedic hymns, considered the earliest mythological expression, and in particular the myth of dawn as the ultimate creation myth. The main topos related to the process of destruction is the myth of war – already presented in the founding manifesto of futurism as the world's only hygiene – which in *Uccidiamo* Marinetti calls 'la nostra unica speranza, la nostra ragione di vivere, la nostra sola volontà!' [our only hope, our reason to live, our only will!]. Indeed, in this text the myth of war is used as an instrument to 'far saltare in aria tutte le tradizioni, come ponti fradici!' [blow up all traditions, like rotten bridges!].[7] In this second manifesto, however, the focus is on European decadence, and Europe is addressed as in need of the Orient, and India in particular, to accomplish a regeneration, even though what is at stake is a global regeneration which is to benefit from the East's forces of creation and newly found dynamism through modernisation. Tradition is

6 Assagioli, 'Per un nuovo umanesimo ariano', p. 182.

7 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna*, in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, ed. L. De Maria (Milan: Mondadori, 1960), pp. 14–26 (15).

thus associated with the 'vecchio sole europeo' [old European sun], whose destruction will enable the 'Ideale' [ideal], that is, the 'fusione d'un nuovo globo solare che presto vedremo risplendere!' [fusion of a new solar globe which we will soon see shining!]. In order to create a new solar globe – the global futurist avant-garde – Marinetti invites his futurist men to leave the city of Paralisi, to destroy Podagra – the two cities associated with Europe and the decaying sun of the past – and to return to the Himalayas – also described as 'l'altipiano persiano, sublime altare del mondo' [the Persian plateaux, the sublime altar of the world]. Global regeneration through Indo-European idealism will be conducted by means of technology, that is, by laying down 'il gran Binario militare' [the great military railtrack], the symbol of futurism, 'sui fianchi del Gorisankar, vetta del mondo!' [by the sides of the Gorisankar, peak of the world!].[8] This place, with its Indian-sounding name, where the ultimate creation of the new futurist firmament will occur, is informed by Aryan humanism and the notion of India as the cradle of the world: if India and the Veda provided the ultimate source of origin, the renewal of the world according to Marinetti and futurism – or, better, the birth of a global modernity and a global futurism – must originate in the world's cradle, that is, the Indian plateaux. Once again the worldwide dimension triggered by Indic Orientalism is appropriated to create global imageries in which to discuss decadence and regeneration.

The myth of dawn, the ultimate myth of origin, is called upon to provide the living sap for the creation of the new solar globe, as we are told that 'l'entusiasmo inesauribile dell'Aurora traboccava giù dalle montagne, tanto copiosamente la notte aveva dovunque versato profumi e linfe eroiche' [the inexhaustible enthusiasm of the dawn overflowed down from the mountains, so copiously the night had everywhere poured fragrances and heroic lymphs].[9] The myth of dawn is also related to the other main other element of futurism, the murder of the moonlight, which brings us again back to Leopardi's interrogation of the moon in the Asian plateaux, and hints at Marinetti's overcoming of both Romanticism and Classicism, as well as existentialism, in order to stage his rhetoric of regeneration through

8 Marinetti, *Uccidiamo*, pp. 14–21.

9 Marinetti, *Uccidiamo*, p. 18.

destruction: 'Si udì gridare nella solitudine aerea degli altipiani: Uccidiamo il chiaro di Luna!' [One could hear in the aerial solitude of the plateaux: let's murder the moonlight!].[10] Futurist blood is said to be required to 'ricolorare le aurore ammalate della Terra!' [to recolour the sick dawns of the earth!] and for the creation of the new solar globe. The Vedic myth of dawn is at the heart of the destruction-creation process of futurism, which together with all the mythological figures, will work in the Indian plateaux to give birth to a new sun, the symbol of regeneration: 'Si, noi sapremo riscaldarti fra le nostre braccia fumanti, o misero Sole, decrepito e freddoloso, che tremi sulla cima del Gorisankar!' [Yes, we will be able to make you warm between our smoking arms, oh wretched Sun, age-worn and cold, who trembles on the peak of the Gorisankar].[11]

Marinetti's early work – including the symbolist collection *Destruction* (1907) and the novel *Mafarka le futuriste* (1909) – is highly interesting in terms of its engagement with and celebration of the Orient, both in aesthetic and ideological terms, and an overall analysis of Marinetti's literary Orientalism, with all its contradictions and turning points related to his entanglement with fascism, is long overdue (far from being an Orientalism in the Saidian sense, a great deal of futurist Orientalism, as in the case of *Uccidiamo*, celebrates the emancipation and rebirth of the Orient, not least because Marinetti was profoundly attached to Egypt). In particular in *Uccidiamo*, India, the Indian Ocean and the Orient play a central role in the birth of futurism and in futurism's allegorical epic battle against European decadence. Nietzsche's anti-historicism,[12] coupled with Henri

10 Marinetti, *Uccidiamo*, p. 22.

11 Marinetti, *Uccidiamo*, p. 26.

12 According to the German thinker, it is worth reminding ourselves, 'there is a degree … of the historical sense, which is harmful and ultimately fatal to the living thing, whether this living thing be a man or a people or a culture'. The interpretation of the past, the philosopher argued, becomes dangerous if it is not located in the context of 'the fullest exertion of the vigour of the present'. In other words, it is only by living the present as 'an architect of the future' that one can understand 'what is worth knowing and preserving in the past'. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 94. In this work, the term 'unhistorical thought' is used to describe Nietzsche's philosophical

Bergson's notions of vitalism and simultaneity, and Édouard Schuré's theosophical thought, are the intellectual underpinnings of *Uccidiamo*.[13] Simona Cigliana, in her investigation of the esoteric dimension of futurism, for instance, has identified some of the Indian elements present in *Uccidiamo*, as well as in other foundational pieces, such as *Mafarka*.[14] In particular, she has traced the influence of the theosophical work of Édouard Schuré on Marinetti, especially *Les Grands Initiés. Esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions. Rama, Khrisna, Manes, Moïse, Orphée, Pythagore, Platon, Jésus* (1906), a work influenced by Orientalist philology.[15]

As Luca Somigli explains, Marinetti devises a 'rhetoric of the future arising out from the destruction of the past',[16] but it is the Orient (and the tradition of literary Orientalism) that provides the agents for the destruction of the past and the creation of the future (and not just Africa or primitivism). All the mythological heroes of this early futurist production (sun, sea, trains, airplanes, wild beasts, metallic men like Gazourmah in *Mafarka*, etc.) have Oriental connotations and act accordingly as forces of destruction, fertilisation and creation. Indeed, I would argue that Marinetti's

---

rejection of the concept of history. I use the term 'unhistorical' to mean not only 'a-historical', but also to refer to an anti-historicist mode of thinking. For a general discussion of this term in the context of historicism, see Paul Hamilton, *Historicism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). For the use of the term 'unhistorical' in the context of the influence of Friedrich Nietzsche on Marinetti and futurism, see Luca Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism, 1885–1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p. 115.

13 As Günter Berghaus, among many others, has pointed out, Marinetti's early poetry is imbued with Nietzschean ideas (in particular those of the superman in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*), while Bergson's 'concepts of the *élan vital*, voluntarism and intuition, of time, change and duration and, derived from this, of simultaneity and interpretation' are also present in Marinetti's work. See Günter Berghaus, *Futurism and Politics: Between Anarchist Rebellion and Fascist Reaction, 1909–1944* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1996), and Simona Cigliana, *Futurismo esoterico. Contributi per una storia dell'irrazionalismo italiano tra Otto e Novecento* (Naples: Liguori, 2002).

14 For Schuré's influence on Marinetti, see Cigliana, *Futurismo esoterico*, pp. 192–4.

15 Edouard Schuré, *The Great Initiates: Sketch of the Secret History of Religions* (London: Rider, 1913), 2 vols, vol. 1, p. 47.

16 Somigli, *Legitimizing the Artist*, pp. 113, 115.

unique formulation of the trope of a dynamic, vitalist Orient is in line with the spread of modernity in the East through the network of imperialism and the consequent rise of anti-colonial nationalism in European colonies. During the period between the 1890s and the 1920s, as Chris Bayly and Leila Fawaz have demonstrated, the region spanning from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean experienced the impact of global modernity. Although the various contacts occurred mainly through the network of colonialism, the cultures and societies of the region appropriated, adapted or resisted European modernity, thus blurring the distinctions between East and West. The results of these exchanges were, on the one hand, cultural cosmopolitanism and the spread of technological innovation and, on the other, anti-colonial nationalism.[17] European colonies, such as Egypt and India, embraced and borrowed many aspects of European modernity, but developed their own dynamic forms of modernity. Marinetti's work embodies this dynamic vision of India and the Orient at large, and such dynamism is what informs his conception of the future and futurism. The birth of futurism in *Mafarka*, for instance, occurs with the conception of Gazourmah, the metallic, god-like man of Egyptian and Islamic heritage who is a symbol of all the ideals of futurism: youth, eternity, technology and the will to power. In *Mafarka*, the metaphorical agent of destruction is the Alexandrian sea, while rebirth occurs with the conception of Gazourmah, Mafarka's son. Mafarka himself, depicted as an Islamic king (Mafarka-el-Bar, king of Tell-el-Kibir), expresses his hope of Islamic victories for his city. Alexandria's gulf takes centre stage in the shipwreck of history, whose allegorical portrayal, featuring an amphitheatre and a cross, has connotations of a dying classical and Christian tradition.[18] The overcoming of the tradition destroyed by the sea is staged using the metallic flying figure of Gazourmah, as is born, flies over the sea. *Uccidiamo*, in turn, replicates the process of destruction of the past and creation of the future, but its style differs from that of the

17 Leila Tarazi Fawaz and C. A. Bayly, 'Introduction: The Connected World of Empires', in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, eds Fawaz and Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 1–10 (1).

18 Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, *Mafarka le futuriste: Roman Africain* (Paris: Sansot, 1909), p. 294.

other two works. Though a second manifesto of futurism, and linked to the first manifesto, it is less of a programme and consists of a hybrid narration, which mixes the fantastic with an incendiary rhetoric of renewal.

What is unique about Marinetti's Orient and futurist Orientalism in this early production is that he draws on or refers to Islam, Vedism, and African primitivism in order to create his revolutionary forces of destruction and creation. Similarly, the geographical areas he concentrates on include Europe, Egypt, black Africa, the Indian Ocean and India. In *Uccidiamo*, which for reasons of space is the focus of my survey, Marinetti evidently refers to the 'globe', with the Indian plateaux as its cradle, and the Indian Ocean as the ultimate destructive force. The process of destruction and creation, however, is articulated by merging the forces of (Oriental) nature and those of (European) technology. These Oriental-Western, mythological-technological forces of futurism are the foundation on which Marinetti 'globalises' his literary production, thus confirming Orientalism's globalising tendencies, and Indic Orientalism's contribution to avant-garde literary experimentation (Marinetti's neo-Romantic experimentation does create parallels with Berchet's Romantic experimentations).

Gozzano's existentialism: Anti-historicism, the aesthetics of hallucination and crepuscolarismo

Guido Gozzano was the leading figure of the decadent group of poets called *crepuscolari* operating in turn-of-the-century Italy. The *crepuscolari* – a term coined by literary critic Giuseppe Borgese – was intended to point to how these poets were concerned with a rhetoric of European historical progress which they considered to have reached a 'crepuscolo' [twilight] as the world was approaching its first greatest conflict as yet. The themes of the poetry of *crepuscolari* poets were concerned with questions of intimacy (*intimismo*), resignation (*rassegnazione*) and the spirit of renunciation (*spirito di rinuncia*), as well as escape to dream-like lands where peace and silence would reign. In some of his previous work, such as the poetry collection *La via del rifugio* (1907), Gozzano had already shown an interest in the Orient and exotic lands. However, it is with his *Verso la cuna*

del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914 – a collection of fourteen travel accounts depicting India and Indians – that he experimented with both Indic Orientalism and the increasingly popular genre of travel literature. Such experimentation Gozzano conducted in the context of existentialist themes stemming from a disillusionment with symbolist aesthetics, history, materialism, Darwinism and, more specifically to Italy, the bombastic rhetoric of nationalism and Classicism of literary figures such as Gabriele D'Annunzio and Giosuè Carducci (indeed, in many ways Gozzano and Marinetti emerged from the same historical crisis, though they reacted in very different ways).[19]

Generally speaking, critics have located Gozzano's exoticism within the decadent trend of fascination for exotic far-away lands as the place to seek refuge from the reality of modern life.[20] Indeed, Gozzano was in ill health when he travelled to India, and commentators have considered the journey to the Indian warmer climate as an attempt to alleviate the symptoms of his tuberculosis, even though this was coupled with a curiosity towards India due to the popularity of Indic Orientalism in popular, esoteric and touristic cultures. Though Gozzano's letters borrow heavily from positivist and impressionist sources, the new idealist Aryan humanism and a renewed interest in spirituality and mysticism, together with the rise of anti-historicism and anti-realism, should all be considered when assessing the conception of the Indian letters.

While Gozzano's anti-historicism has a different dynamic and a different aesthetic purpose from Marinetti's, both were influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche unhistorical thought. According to Antonio Piromalli, Nietzsche's unhistorical thought reached Gozzano through Renato Serra's popularisation of the German's work.[21] This is confirmed by Francesco Cotorbia, who, quoting from Serra, argues that what proved particularly

19 See François Livi, *Tra crepuscolarismo e futurismo: Govoni e Palazzeschi* (Milan: Istituto Propaganda Libraria, 1980); Ines Scaramucci, *Narrativa contemporanea e "condizione crepuscolare"* (Milan: Istituto Propaganda Libraria, 1975).

20 See Roberto Carnero, *Guido Gozzano esotico* (Anzio: De Rubeis, 1996), p. 68.

21 Antonio Piramalli, *Ideologia e arte in Guido Gozzano* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1972), p. 15.

influential on *crepuscolarismo* was both Serra's belief that 'la logica della storia è la contraddizione' [the logic of history is contradiction], and his emphasis on the paradoxical and gloomy aspects of historical process:

> la storia è triste, assurda come la vita e contraddittoria come la realtà: essa si ribella perennemente al nostro istinto di comporla in un'armonia sola, in cui non ci sia niente di sciupato .... La storia è piena di fatiche e di dolori che sono passati sulla terra senza testimonio; è piena di fatti che non si conciliano, di uomini che sono stati nemici, diversi e ingiusti l'uno verso l'altro per tutta l'eternità. C'è un bisogno di felicità in noi che si rifiuta ad ammetere questo; e si prova di spiegare e di giustificare. Inutilmente.
>
> [History is sad, absurd like life and contradictory like reality: it is perennially rebelling against our instinct to compose it harmoniously in a way in which nothing is spoilt ..... History is full of strains and suffering which have occurred on the earth without leaving testimony; it is full of facts that do not add up, of men that have been enemies, different and unjust towards one another for eternity. There is a need of happiness in us that makes us unwilling to recognise this; and that tries to explain and justify history uselessly.][22]

As Giuseppe Savoca and Mario Tropea explain, it is in light of this pessimistic view of history and reality that the 'crepuscolari ... dichiaravano la loro modernità in maniera contradditoria e ambigua' [the *crepuscolari* ... declared their modernity in an ambiguous and contradictory manner]. They rejected historicism and realism in place of 'la strada del sogno' [the path of dream] and 'della regressione verso l'infanzia' [of a regression towards childhood] (i.e. the primitive Other). Their renunciation of history in particular derived from the polemical conception that it had reached its 'crepuscolo' [twilight]. As the name of the cultural movement suggests, *crepuscolarismo* thus celebrated the idea of 'crisi storica' [crisis of history].[23] *Crepuscolarismo*'s narration of the twilight of history is articulated through the complex, contradictory and pessimistic relationship between the primitive and the modern. This dichotomy revolves around the usage of a language of irony

22 Renato Serra quoted in Francesco Contorbia, 'Serra e Nietzsche', *Il lettore di provincia*, 1.2 (1970), 1–25 (17). Contorbia does not provide the details of Serra's source.

23 Giuseppe Savoca and Mario Tropea, *Pascoli, Gozzano e i crepuscolari* (Bari: Laterza, 1976), p. 93.

and ambiguity with which to create a rhetoric of 'contradiction' (i.e. a rhetoric consisting of extreme opposite ideas) that functions as a 'pertinente metafora storica di morte e nascita insieme, appunto di crepuscolo, nel doppio significato di fine e principio' [pertinent historical metaphor of death and birth together, that is, of twilight, in the double meaning of end and beginning].[24] Indeed, like in Marinetti's *Uccidiamo*, Indian origins and European modernity come together, but unlike futurism, in Gozzano's aesthetics and ideology these two elements are brought together to create contrasts rather than harmony. This contradictory rhetoric shaped *crepuscolarismo*'s ideology and defined its idiosyncratic engagement with modernism, whose mocking playfulness, scepticism and irony almost makes it an instance of postmodernism *avant la lettre*. Giuseppe Zaccaria argues in fact that, like Luigi Pirandello, Gozzano cultivated 'il sentimento del contrario' [the sentiment of the contrary], which had the purpose of pointing to the crisis of narratives of order, progress and evolution in place of narratives pertaining to the contradictions of existence:

> Gozzano resta all'interno di una crisi della coscienza e della conoscenza, ... che, interrogandosi sul destino dell'uomo e della sulla finitudine, offre continuo alimento a una ricerca esistenziale sempre aperta e tesa. ... È il tentativo ... di tenere uniti gli opposti, di conciliare ...l'inconciliabile, operando quella sintesi che certe esperienze osservate nell'India sembravano ancora in grado di realizzare, soprattutto per quanto riguardo ... l'indecidibilità del rapporto vita-morte.
>
> [Gozzano remains within the crisis of conscience and of knowledge ... which, as it interrogates itself on the destiny of humankind and of its finitude, offers continuous nourishment to an existentialist research always open and tending outward ... It is the attempt .... to keep the opposites united, to reconcile ... the irreconcilable, working towards the synthesis that certain experiences observed in India seemed still able to achieve, especially as regards ... the undecidability of the life-death relation.][25]

Like Leopardi, then, Gozzano's letters point to the meaninglessness of the pilgrimage of the modern man that returns to his primitive Oriental cradle.

24 Savoca and Tropea, *Pascoli, Gozzano e i crepuscolari*, p. 93.

25 Giuseppe Zaccaria, *'Reduce dall'amore e dalla morte': un Gozzano alle soglie del postmoderno* (Novara: Interlinie, 2009), pp. 23, 115.

Similarly, like Leopardi's, Gozzano's existentialist Orientalism is staged through the denial of the optimism of the Orientalist knowledge on which it is based (i.e. De Gubernatis' travel writing). Leopardi's aim is a critique of modernity and, in an amgibuous way, of Romanticism; Gozzano's is primarily a critique of history, and an engagement with neo-Romantic trends. However, unlike Leopardi's, Gozzano's literary Orientalism remains predominantly Eurocentric, Anglomaniac and imperialistic.

Verso la cuna can be considered a case-study of *crepuscolarismo*'s ideology and aesthetics.[26] The modern European man's return to his primitive Indian cradle marks both Gozzano's and *crepuscolarismo*'s (negative) engagement with history, bringing together the notion of primordial origins in relation to India as the cradle of the world, and historical climax, in relation to Britain as the ultimate embodiment of modernity. The author's scepticism and pessimism regarding historical process are expressed by means of the clash of the primitive and the modern, where opposite extremes coexist in order to create the subjective nightmarish encounter between the modern European man and his primordial cradle. As opposed to Marinetti's *Uccidiamo*, where East and West merge harmoniously in a new optimistic global modernity, Gozzano focuses on the contrasts between Indian primitivism and European modernity in the context of British India to point to the contradictions of global modernity. Moreover, as opposed to the anti-realism of Marinetti, which is rooted in the attempt to devise a new avant-garde mythology, the anti-realism of Gozzano is based on subjective perception and impressionism. The latter creates a division between East and West through an existentialist aesthetic evoking hallucination in the European-Italian traveller's experience of India. Indeed, as Savoca and Tropea have demonstrated, Gozzano's Indian writings reflect Gozzano's 'poetics of hallucination' as the letters 'toccano i vertici della massima tensione antirealistica fino all'allucinazione del sogno ad occhi aperti' [they reach the heights of anti-realist tension up to the hallucination of daydream].[27] Inevitably, the poetics of hallucination rely on anti-realist aesthetic strategies which Gozzano adopts as he appropriates and aestheticises

26 Bruno Porcelli, *Gozzano. Originalità e plagi* (Bologna: Patron, 1974), pp. 11–14.
27 Savoca and Tropea, *Pascoli, Gozzano e i crepuscolari*, p. 118.

previous positivist and impressionistic accounts of India, creating an inextricable link between hallucination, anti-realism and inter-textuality.

Anti-realism and inter-textual construction

The journey to India that Gozzano reports in his travel writings is primarily a textual one. Critics of Gozzano have identified parallels between his Indian letters and other travel writing, such as Pierre Loti's *L'Inde (sans les Anglais)* (1903), Angelo De Gubernatis' *Peregrinazioni indiane* (1886–7), Ernst Haeckel's *Lettere di un viaggiatore nell'India* (1892; Italian translation), and Paolo Mantegazza's *India* (1884).[28] As many critics have argued, a textual comparison of the above texts reveals that Gozzano used these works almost to the point of plagiarism, often paraphrasing large sections and borrowing itineraries. Moreover, with the exception of the impressionist style of Loti's travel writing, all the other texts used by Gozzano are informed by historicism and positivism. Gozzano's project of disengagement with reality is further demonstrated by his use of fake dates and his descriptions of places he never saw (the dates and places that appear in *Verso la cuna* are fictitious).[29] Apart from 'Le grotte della Trimurti',

28 Pierre Loti, *L'Inde (sans les Anglais)* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1903); Ernst Haeckel, *Lettere di un viaggiatore nell'India* (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice, 1892); Paolo Mantegazza, *India* (Milan: Treves, 1884). On the similarities between Gozzano's letters and the above works, see Porcelli, *Gozzano*, p. 11–14; Aletta Grisay, 'L'India di Guido Gozzano e quella di Pierre Loti', *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, 71 (1967), 417–36; Edoardo Sanguineti, *Guido Gozzano. Indagini e letture* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966), pp. 154, 167, 173; Lorenzo Mondo, 'Esotismo di Gozzano', in *Da Dante al Novecento*, ed. Giovanni Getto (Milan: Mursia, 1970), pp. 555–68; Cristina della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style*; Giulia Benvenuti, *Il viaggiatore come autore*.

29 The fictitiousness of the dates and places in the narrative has been demonstrated by Giorgio De Rienzo, who has studied the correspondence between Gozzano and his relatives and friends during his journey to India. See Giorgio De Rienzo's 'Le "lettere indiane" di Guido Gozzano', in *L'arte di interpretare: Studi critici offerti a Giovanni Getto*, ed. Istituto di Italianistica, Università di Torino (Cuneo: Arciere, 1984), 683–700.

'Le Torri del Silenzio' and 'Il vivaio del buon Dio', which are not dated, all the other 'Indian letters' collected in the first edition of the volume, edited by Antonio Borgese, are dated between 14 December 1912 ('Goa: "La Dourada"') and 23 February 1913 ('Il fiume dei roghi').[30] However, the real journey took place between February and April 1912. This is demonstrated by the epistolary evidence uncovered by Giorgio De Rienzo, which also suggests that Gozzano did not visit many of the places about which he wrote, with the exception of Bombay, Ceylon and possibly Goa.[31] The question of the fictitiousness of the letters is further complicated by the fact that the volume was published only after Gozzano's death in 1917, even though Carlo Calcaterra and Andrea De Marchi suggest that Gozzano himself had asked his brother Renato to publish the collection, going so far as to indicate the order of the accounts.[32] The single 'letters' were first published in various Italian newspapers such as *La Lettura*, *La Stampa* and *La Donna* between 1914 and 1916.[33] As a result, critics have also questioned whether *Verso la cuna* should be approached as a coherent volume of travel writing or as a collection of independent narratives.[34] However, the publication of the individual letters as a volume, which explicitly refers to India as the cradle of the world, is but another instance of the popularity in Italy of the Indo-European theory and Aryan humanism, and their impact on the Italian imagination. The publisher of the volume, Fratelli Treves, also published Barrili's novel and was Italy's most prestigious

30 See Guido Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1913* (Milan: Treves, 1917).

31 See De Rienzo, 'Le "lettere indiane" di Guido Gozzano', p. 695.

32 Piero Cudini, 'Prefazione', in Gozzano, *Un Natale a Ceylon e altri racconti indiani*, ed. Piero Cudini (Milan: Garzanti, 1984), pp. 7–39 (9).

33 Cudini, 'Prefazione', in *Un Natale a Ceylon*, pp. 7–15.

34 Cudini, 'Prefazione', in *Un Natale a Ceylon*, pp. 7–39. Cudini considers *Verso la cuna del mondo* textually unreliable because it was posthumously published and does not reflect Gozzano's intentions. Cudini goes so far as to edit a new collection of the 'letters' which aims to follow the order of the Indian letters' first publication in different newspapers. He regards these writings as journalistic narratives destined for a public that wished to learn about the 'Oriente da favola' [fabulous Orient]. See 'Prefazione', p. 20.

publisher at the time, and it is not surprising that a cosmopolitan figure like Antonio Borgese undertook the task of editing the volume as a collection of letters that addressed one of the most popular topics of the age: the European historical pilgrimage to the Indian cradle. Gozzano and Borgese were experimenting with Orientalism, like Marinetti and his other predecessors, with the awareness that by now even the Italian readership was fascinated by Orientalist themes.

In her brilliant study of the Indian letters, Cristina della Coletta has explored questions of readership, the new needs and demands of the Italian bourgeoisie, their relationship with the Italian colonial campaign and the role played by newspapers and magazines in turn-of-the-century Italy. Moreover, she argues that despite the letters' 'fragmentary, redundant and frequently contradictory features', by emphasising the 'discontinuities and inconsistencies, we discover that they reveal symptoms of an ideology in a state of transition, in a world undergoing dramamtic changes'.[35] Indeed, I aim to focus on the existentialist *angst* of this transition by exploring Gozzano's letters through the transformations from positivist to anti-realist narratives in Indic Orientalism.

Crucially, though, Della Coletta forges a link between Gozzano's Indian letters and the 1911 Turin World Exhibition and creates illuminating parallels between the global dimension of the content of the exhibition and the global, if strident imagery of the Indian letters. She claims that by 'liberally mixing geographical spaces and historical times', as Gozzano does in his Indian imagery (though Della Coletta is here referring in particular to one image of the Bombay harbour in 'Le grotte'), the poet creates 'a simultaneous world' typical of world exhibitions 'where the similar and the discordant, the near and the distant, the present and the past, the huge and the diminutive, converge and co-exist all at once'.[36] As Hsu-Ming Teo explains, however, world exhibitions were an outcome of Orientalism, not their source: to put it in Teo's words, they were forms of 'Orientalism that fed dreams of consumption and playful experimentations with identity'.[37]

35 Della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style*, p. 180.
36 Della Coletta, *World's Fairs Italian Style*, p. 185.
37 Teo, *Desert Passions*, p. 2.

As argued by Amir Mufti, moreover, the Orientalist revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries brought about the globalisation of literature, and the (mainly European) consumption of world culture which by the twentieth century had reached mass audiences and broad popularity in cultural and commercial consumption. World Exhibitions were another expression of this new global dimension triggered by Orientalism (through the network of imperialism), so it is crucial to take the tradition of Indic Orientalism as a starting point when assessing Gozzano's letters. Furthermore, ancient Indian civilisation and the Vedas played perhaps the greatest role in the Orientalist reconfiguration of world civilisation and notions of civilisational origins, and contributed to the creation of hierarchies of European and Oriental cultures which informed imperial ideology. Undoubtedly Gozzano borrowed from a variety of contexts, whether literary, scientific and visual, as well as his own experience of the Turin World Exhibition and of India itself. The textual sources all share the same significance of India to European modernity as a result of Aryanism and new conceptions of world civilisation, and it is on this aspect of Indological thought that I wish to focus my close analysis of aspects of the letters, especially in relation to Gozzano's borrowing from De Gubernatis' Indological travel narrative *Peregrinazioni indiane*.

Gozzano's rejection of reality as a poetical tool, as Giuliana Benvenuti points out, makes the Indian letters an eloquent example of what Edward Said has called the textual construction of the Orient in modern European (travel) literature.[38] Benvenuti locates Gozzano's work in a long tradition of Romantic and symbolist European authors, such as Victor Hugo, Gérard de Nerval and Gustave Flaubert, who construct their texts about the Orient by borrowing from other travel accounts rather than basing them on their own impressions or empirical observations. In this sense, not only does Gozzano's anti-realist intertextuality serve the purposes of the aesthetics of *crepuscolarismo*; it also serves the purposes of Eurocentrism as the letters depict India according to typical patterns of contemporary European representations of a timeless and decadent Orient, rescued by European imperialism. Although

38 Benvenuti, *Il viaggiatore come autore*, p. 73.

it has been argued that the *crepuscolari* rejected nationalism,[39] it cannot be denied that one can find in *Verso la cuna* some of the most extreme stereotypes of Oriental racial and cultural inferiority, typical of the discourse of European imperialism. It is also important to point out that some of the newspapers in which the letters were first published between 1914 and 1916, such as *La Stampa*, were dedicated in particular to the Italian colonial campaign, which, after the Libyan conquest of 1911, had become a popular topic.[40] The representation of British imperialism in India would therefore have been a relevant topic for Italian bourgeois readers eager to learn about European imperialism, and its most exemplary manifestation in British India, which allowed them to imagine the development of the Italian colonial campaign.

Della Coletta's work is particularly useful in the interpretation of the aesthetic and political processes at work in Gozzano's letters. According to her, Gozzano adopts a logic of binary opposition between Western aesthetics and Indian aesthetics which for Della Colletta is rooted in the hierarchies of European imperialism: 'If, in the West, classical beauty depends on principles of harmony and proportion and conveys a sense of wholeness and organic unity, India features an upside-down world built on the perverse negation of these valued notions'.[41] For Della Coletta, Gozzano's depiction of the Madura temple in particular is approached 'with the criteria of classical aesthetics', and therefore, 'Gozzano cannot but consider the Indian temple as a challenge to Western artistic sensibilities'.[42] Della Coletta's overall judgement of Gozzano's aesthetic practice in the letters is summed up in her analysis of his chapter on

39 According to Savoca and Tropea, 'i crepuscolari, come sorpresi e sbandati dalla crisi del positivismo, non accettarono le mitologie nazionalistiche proposte dalla borghesia dominante e scelsero, quasi involontariamente, di restare appartati, di rifugirasi nella quotidiana penombra della provincia per leggerne i segni, e cogliere le tristezze di una vita senza ideali ed eroismi' [surprised and disorientated by positivism's crisis, the *crepusculari* did not accept the nationalist mythologies proposed by the dominating middle class, and chose, almost unintentionally, to keep withdrawn ... in the semi-darkness of the province to read its signs and capture the sadness of a life without ideals and heroism]. Savoca and Tropea, *Pascoli, Gozzano e i crepuscolari*, p. 92.

40 Martin Clark, *Modern Italy: 1871–1982* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 154.

41 Della Coletta, *World Fairs*, p. 193.

42 Della Coletta, *World Fairs*, p. 193.

the Madura temple, which is the ultimate example of how Indian shapes, 'in their unnatural, hybrid, freakish, extravagant, and ridiculous forms, and in their defiance of all laws of statics, symmetry, and proportion, … are seen as replicating the European grotesque'.[43] As will be seen, the Indian imageries that Gozzano creates are informed by dissymmetry and disproportion (i.e. the grotesque already explored with Trezza's use of Hegel's phenomenology of Spirit in Chapter 6), and Della Coletta is correct in claiming that these aesthetic choices pertain to questions of identity and imperial desire on the part of Italians. However, she hardly explores the legacy of Indology and Indic Orientalism which is central to Gozzano's letters, and the ways in which existentialism informs his personal stamp on such tradition.

Moreover, with reference to the production of travel writing at the turn of the century, it is important to remember that, as Helen Carr explains, from the start of the twentieth century, travel writing began to be taken up by more and more novelists and poets who wrote works that shared more concerns with imaginative literature than scholarship and knowledge production. This was a move, says Carr, 'from the detailed realist text, often with an overtly didactic or at any rate moral purpose, to a more impressionistic style with the interest focused as much on the travellers' responses or consciousness as their travels'. This is indeed what happens to Gozzano, who borrows, as Carr would put it, from 'the scientific or scholarly text [which] is usually written for academic fellow experts' and transforms it into 'a more subjective form, more memoir than manual'.[44] Gozzano relied heavily on these kinds of 'scientific' texts – from Mantegazza's, De Gubernatis' and Haeckel's texts – though he drew on the impressionist text of Loti too, and reworked them from this subjective and impressionistic point of view. My focus here is on how he drew on and mocked De Gubernatis' Indological discourse of Aryan historicity and Italian expansionism in *Peregrinazioni indiane*, thus depicting India as an incomprehensibly nightmarish world on which to stage a contradictory Euromania tainted by existentialism.

43 Della Coletta, *World Fairs*, p. 196.

44 Helen Carr, 'Modernism and travel (1880–1940)', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds T. Youngs and P. Hulme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 70–86 (41–4).

De Gubernatis, Gozzano and the Aryan historical pilgrimage: From historicist Indomania to existentialist Indophobia

In Gozzano's text, the process of anti-realist textual borrowing works in tandem with an anti-historicist conceptual reworking of some of the borrowed texts. Gozzano's borrowing from De Gubernatis' Indologist 'archive' was not unusual during this period, and constitutes an excellent example of what Said has called 'the interchange between the academic and the more or less imaginative meanings of Orientalism'.[45] Said refers to professional Orientalism as an 'archive of information' from which literary Orientalism borrows, and claims that '[w]hat bound the archive together was a family of ideas and a unifying set of values. … These ideas explained the behaviour of Orientals with a mentality, a genealogy, an atmosphere; most important, they allowed Europeans to deal with and even to see Orientals as a phenomenon possessing regular characteristics'.[46] De Gubernatis' depiction of India and Indians is the archive from which Gozzano borrows knowledge to aestheticise it, and while the poet draws on images and themes identified by De Gubernatis, he re-elaborates them in the light of his existentialism. Both authors address the Aryan historical pilgrimage constructed by the Indo-European narratives, but the outcome of their accounts is different. On the one hand, De Gubernatis, like Barrili and Carducci, celebrates the link between ancient India and modern Europe in light of Indo-European historicity, evolutionary thought and Indomania. Gozzano, on the other hand, rejects this optimistic interpretation of the Indo-European kinship, and emphasises the pessimism underlying the civilisational gap between contemporary Indians and Europeans. In order to better appreciate Gozzano's sceptical attitude towards Aryan historicity, it is worth examining how he reworks the Indological source and its historicist concerns.

De Gubernatis' travel writings claim to give an account of the scholar's scientific study of the Aryan race's 'historical pilgrimage' from India to Europe. His journey to India is said to have been driven by a 'desiderio di

45 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 3.
46 Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 41–2.

ritentare le prime sedi … della nostra famiglia ariana' [desire to visit the place of origin … of our Aryan family]. Moreover, in his description of the impact of the discoveries of Indo-European philology, he comments on experiencing Aryan historicity by means of a historical pilgrimage to the place of European and Italian origins: 'ci risentimmo Arii anche noi e ricercammo con amore i nostri dimenticati fratelli d'Oriente e li interrogammo studiosamente per ritrovare i primi passi del nostro pellegrinaggio storico' [we felt Aryan ourselves and we lovingly looked for our forgotten Oriental brothers and we studied them in order to walk again the first steps of our historical pilgrimage]. Most importantly, De Gubernatis attributes a specific historical value to the notion of 'patria ariana', [Aryan homeland] as he portrays it as the 'prima fonte della nostra genesi e della nostra vita storica' [primary source of our own genesis and historical life].[47] The rhetoric of a historical pilgrimage serves the purpose of positioning modern Europeans (and Italians) at the peak of history, and establishing an evolutionary relationship between Europeans and the Indian cradle (and contemporary Indians).

Gozzano, too, stages European man's return to his Indian cradle. However, he interprets the notion of a historical pilgrimage and evolution with scepticism, by emphasising the impossible reconciliation between contemporary Indians and Europeans and thereby rejecting Indo-European kinship and positive historicity:

> L'occidentale, che ritorna in India, non riconosce più la sua cuna. So bene, questi Indù sono ariani del nostro ceppo, fratelli nostri, ma fratelli che rifiutano di tenderci la mano. Siamo troppo diversi. Ci dividono troppi millennii. Da troppo tempo ci siamo detti addio.
>
> [The western man who goes back to India does not recognise any more his cradle. I know only too well that these Hindus are Aryans of our stock, our brothers, but brothers that refuse to reach out to us, We are too different. Too many millennia divide us. We bade farewell too long ago.][48]

47 De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane. India Centrale*, i, pp. 6–7.

48 Guido Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India*, ed. Franco Maria Ricci (Parma and Milan: La Biblioteca Blu, 1974), p. 81. All quotations from *Verso la cuna* are from this edition.

The picture that Gozzano offers, however, is never quite clear cut. On one level, he attempts to widen the gap between Europeans and Indians by blaming Indian religions for India's lack of progress: 'Come costoro sono lontani da noi! ... Si sono rassegnati serenamente, dai tempi della origine ariana, a questa disperata certezza. Nulla è tutto diviene' [how distant they are from us! ... They serenely resigned from the times of Aryan origin, to this desperate certainty. Nothing is and all becomes].[49] On another level, though, he portrays primitive India as a spiritual place where refuge can be sought from European rationalism, progress and materialism. Gozzano compares the Indians bathing in the sacred river in Benares with the European bourgeoisie,[50] and makes an 'odioso confronto con i ... *borghesi* occidentali che deridono ogni cosa dell'anima, deridono ogni scienza dello spirito, bestemmiano Dio, ostentano un ateismo fatto più odioso dal vigliacco ravvedimento dell'ultim'ora!' [hateful comparison with the ... western bourgeoisie who mock everything of the soul and every science of the spirit, swear God and show an atheism which is made more hateful by the cowardly repenting of the last hour!].[51] The contradictory depiction of Indian irrational mysticism and European rational progress is a recurrent feature of the Indian letters as Gozzano does not seem truly satisfied with either of them, which is a symptom of his pessimism. Ali Behdad, however, finds that these contradictions are common in a belated Orientalist discourse:

> The relations of power and knowledge do not constitute a static and unified structure of distribution. They are organised according to what Foucault calls a 'tactical polyvalence' that maintains an economy of continual variation to suit the shifting needs of its discursive field.[52]

The needs of Gozzano's discursive field pertain to various elements ranging from a concern with the aesthetics of decadence, the popularity of Indological

49 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 166.

50 Gozzano came from a bourgeois family himself and was familiar with the Turinese middle classes. Also, the Italian bourgeoisie grew particularly in the first decade of the twentieth century, as Italy underwent an industrial revolution between 1898 and 1914.

51 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 159.

52 Behdad, *Belated Travelers*, p. 17.

themes, Italian colonial desire and Euromania, as well as a pessimism and existentialism of Leopardian inspiration which is here combined with a new aestheticised way of producing travel writing. With all these elements in mind, I now turn to some of the most eloquent examples of Gozzano's poetics of hallucination, where religion, race and colonialism play a crucial role in the construction of the contrasts between Indians and Europeans.

Paradise lost, or Christmas in hell

The contrast *par excellence* between the Indianness and the Europeaness occurs through religion. In 'Un Natale a Ceylon', Gozzano depicts the ultimate religious paradox and existentialist experience: a Christian man spending Christmas Day in Ceylon, that is, in the place associated, according to the Orientalist scholarship of De Gubernatis (and as already seen with Barrili), with Creation and paradise. Again, it is important to compare De Gubernatis' and Gozzano's writings in order to get a better sense of Gozzano's pessimistic rendition of De Gubernatis' celebratory accounts of Indo-European historicity, with particular reference to how the positivistic Indian 'paradise' as a place of creation and evolution becomes an apocalyptic hell of monstrosity and terror. On the one hand, De Gubernatis gives an account of Ceylon which is characterised by the exuberance, fecundity and fertility of creation. The Indian island is depicted in all its primitive but paradisiacal features:

> Le scene che sfilano innanzi al viaggiatore sono svariatissime; … arbusti, liane, orchidee, palmizi si succedono si intrecciano, si confondono in una gran pompa, in un'orgia infinita. Di un tratto in tratto si apre tra due roccie lo sfondo di una valle tranquilla, paradisiaca; … e l'aria che si respira è quella che si potrebbe immaginare per una primavera celeste. … Il paradiso esiste dunque veramente; l'Adamo bramoso non vi manca, e s'egli avesse pure la tentazione d'avvicinare alcun serpente, il giardino n'è pieno.
>
> [The scenes that appear to the traveller one after the other are varied; … shrubs, lianas, orchids, palms follow one another and intermingle in great pomp and in an infinite orgy. Between stretches there opens between two rocks the background of a quiet paradisiac valley … and the air you breath is the one you could image in a

> celestial spring … Paradise, then, really exists; the eager Adam is there, and if he had the temptation of approaching a snake, the garden is full of them.][53]

The positive connotations of De Gubernatis' description of Ceylon, however, are transformed by Gozzano since De Gubernatis' enthusiasm is replaced by apocalyptic pessimism. Gozzano's Ceylon, as the place of origin, is represented as a 'terra perennemente verde' [perennially green land] and a 'sottile zona d'un'estate eterna che copriva, all'inizio, tutto il nostro globo' [a thin area of eternal summer that covered, at the beginning of time, all our globe].[54] The elements of eternal summer and the fecund greenness are here cause for concern rather than celebration, and create further unfamiliarity and anxiety. On the 'giorno di Natività' [Christmas Day], such 'natura paradisiaca' [paradisiacal nature] appears 'ostile, inquietante come un paesaggio antidiluviano, sul quale debba profilarsi un plesiosauro o un iguanodonte' [hostile, worrying like a antediluvian landscape in which a Plesiosaur or an Iguanodon may appear].[55] Gozzano does not enjoy his pilgrimage as De Gubernatis' more naturalistic and optimistic depiction turns into a negative subjective experience of the Indian paradise of creation. Some days later in the narrative, Gozzano's paradisiacal nature takes on the characteristics of a hellish nature. The emphasis here is on the 'fall' and 'destruction', rather than 'creation', as the poet depicts images of the biblical flood that enhance his pessimistic tone, thus transforming De Gubernatis' Indomania into a hallucinatory Indophobia. As the poet is leaving Ceylon to go to Madura, he observes:

> Dal Picco d'Adamo alle foreste del litorale tutto è avvolto in pochi secondi da una cortina di nubi ondeggianti, cupe e concrete come se scolpite nel marmo livido, mentre il cielo intorno e sul nostro capo resta azzurro e tranquillo; nella cornice fosca, simile all'ovale di nubi artificiose di certi Inferni e di certi Diluvii, guizzano, s'intrecciano lampi azzurri e violetti, e lo scenario interno s'accende di un riverbero sanguigno, profilando in nero i palmizi scapigliati; un'acquata torrenziale, ignorata ai

53 De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane. India meridionale e Seilan*, iii, pp. 203, 207, 219.

54 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 49.

55 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, pp. 48–51.

> nostri climi, appare da lungi, riga il centro del quadro di striature oblique di cristallo; un rombo indescrivibile accompagna l'uragano equatoriale, simile all'orchestra di mille gonghi formidabili.
>
> [From Adam's peak to the coastal forests, everything is enveloped in few seconds by a curtain of waving clouds, dark and real as if sculpted out of a bluish marble, while the sky around and over our head is blue and quiet; in the gloomy frame of artificial clouds of certain Hells and Floods, blue and violet lightings interlace, and the inner scenery lights up of a blood red reverberation, delineating in black the ruffled palm trees; a torrential watering, unknown at our climates, it appears from far; an indescribable thunder accompanies the equatorial hurricane, similar to the orchestra of a thousand formidable gongs.][56]

The myriads of colours and tonalities which Gozzano paints arouse emotions of unfamiliarity, anxiety and tension. The meaninglessness of the Indological notion that Ceylan is the setting of Paradise is addressed through the imagery of equally meaningless Hells and Floods, thus expressing disillusion towards the Indological theorisation and representation of India through biblical imageries. The unenthusiastic feelings that emerge from Gozzano's experience of the Indian paradise include homesickness, or 'la nostalgia, il male tremendo e indescrivibile fatto di sentimenti indefiniti simili all'ansia e al rimorso!' [Homesickness, the tremendous and indescribable sickness made of indefinite feelings similar to anxiety and remorse!].[57] Nothing of the Ceylon paradise can be connected to the European Christmas, and the allegedly paradisiacal nature of Creation becomes an hallucinatory experience, while the feelings of homesickness become curiously intertwined with an engagement with identity discourses enhanced by the Europeanness of Christmas:

> Non è gaio il mio Natale, e la flora che mi circonda non è consolatrice, mi ricorda di continuo la spaventosa distanza della patria; l'illusione non è possibile nemmeno limitando lo sguardo in terra; il piede s'avanza ora fra muschi, licheni mostruosi simili a polipi o a masse madreporiche … . Ai lati, in alto, è il tripudio della flora vegetale e della flora vivente; strani insetti … imitano i rami e le foglie, e farfalle

56 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, pp. 53–4.
57 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 47–8.

> enormi abbagliano nel volo, come una brace verde e azzurra, e posate, si chiudono in un grigiore di foglia morta; fiori strani, petali carne rosea e sanguigna, di porcellana candida o azzurra, fiori che nessuna parentela hanno con i nostri … e tutto è immutato, come ai tempi delle origini.
>
> [My Christmas Day is not merry, and the flora that surrounds me, rather than consoling me, is a constant reminder of the dreadful distance from my homeland; the illusion [of being home] is not even possible by forcing my sight on the ground; the foot goes now between mosses, monstrous lichens similar to octopus or to madreporic masses …. On both sides, high above, there is the rejoicing of the living flora; strange insects … that imitate branches and leaves, and enormous butterflies dazzle in flight, like a green and blue charcoal, and once staid, they close themselves in a greyness of dead leaf; strange flowers, petals of rosy and bloody red flesh, of white or blue porcelain; these are flowers that do not have any relationship with ours … and everything is unchanged, as at the times of origins.][58]

As Charles Burdett has pointed out in relation to the dynamics of travel writing and the inherent process of the discovery of the Self through travel, 'what appears unfamiliar, strange or alien' to the traveller-writer 'may be the object of hostility and motivate a more vigorous attachment to the beliefs and practices that constitute a sense of belonging to a given community'.[59] Gozzano's staging of the European-Italian traveller in the Indian paradise on Christmas Day is the ultimate example of such unfamiliarity and therefore the ideal context to discuss the Self. The suffering pilgrim thus defies the Indian place of origins and there is no celebration of the Aryan *patria*, but only disillusion, nostalgia for home (i.e. the Italian Christmas as a European signifier), and utter meaninglessness expressed through the imagery of an unfamiliar monstrous nature and primordial origins. This is the ultimate chromatic experience of origins of the Italian-European traveller, or the aestheticised nightmare and hallucination of Christian man in his lost (Indian) paradise.

58 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 50.

59 Burdett, *Journeys through Fascism*, p. 7.

British imperialism, Indophobia and (imperial) Anglomania

The peak of Gozzano's Euromania, featuring the more Saidian traits of his Indic Orientalism, occurs through an aesthetic exaltation of British imperialism in India. As for Barrili, Gozzano here constructs images enabling Italian colonial fantasies through a celebration of British imperialism and Anglomania, and De Gubernatis' Indological work is once again instrumental in shaping Gozzano's imperial perspective.

It is useful in this context to recall De Gubernatis' reference to British imperialism in India, especially in relation to his hope that the British will help the Italians to take over the Indian territories still under Portuguese rule. De Gubernatis introduces the topic of Italian–Indian relations in the context of commerce and cultural exchange in the aftermath of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which saw Italy acquiring a new strategic position in the Mediterranean as well as the Indian Ocean. In the light of this new potential geopolitical development, De Gubernatis claims that 'L'Italia è la prima grande nazione civile che possa aprire i suoi porti e mandar le sue navi all'India' [Italy is the first great civilised nation that can open its doors and send its ships to India].[60] He addresses the question of Italian colonialism and the potential developments in India through the depiction of a decadent Portuguese India with the presupposition that, due to the threat of a Russian invasion of India, the Indian territories under Portuguese rule would be safer in Italian hands rather than in Portugal's. This would be so because, unlike Portugal, Italy, a friend of Britain, would safeguard British interests in India and help Britain with the Russian threat:

> Se l'isolotto di Diu, invece di appartenere al Regno del Portogallo, ora tutto rivolto ai suoi possessi africani, e impedito di tentar più cose nuove e grandi nella lontana India, passasse, contro ragionevoli compensi, in virtù di trattatti, alla Corona Italiana, quanto più sicura rimarrebbe l'indipendenza de' numerosi piccoli stati del Kathiavar, quanto valido aiuto potrebbe trovare contro le aggressioni russe l'Impero anglo-indiano in un potente baluardo italiano e quanto slancio si darebbe al commercio italo-indiano. ...; fidi e devoti alleati che miriamo soltanto a promuovere nell'India i nostri commerci,

60 *Peregrinazioni indiane. India centrale*, p. 33.

> non a danno degli Inglesi, ma a reciproco vantaggio; né le sarà inutile cointeressare alla sua fortuna nell'India una nazione valida e bene armata che le è amica.
>
> [If the island of Diu – instead of belonging to Portugal, which is now entirely absorbed by its African possessions and therefore unable to commit to new great enterprises in India – could be given to the Italian crown, through adequate compensations and by virtue of treaties, the independence of the numerous small states of the Kathiavar would be much safer. Diu could find in a powerful Italian bulwark a valid help against the the Russian threats of invasion of the Anglo-Indian empire. This move would also give a boost to Italo-Indian commerce. … [We are] faithful and devoted allies [of Britain] who only aim to promote our commerce in India, not at the expense of the British, but for a reciprocal advantage; nor it will be useless for Britain to share their interests and fortunes in India with Italy, a valid and well-armed nation which is a friend to Britain.][61]

Indeed, as Said has shown, for European powers 'to colonise meant at first the identification – indeed the creation – of interests; these could be commercial, communicational, religious, military, cultural',[62] and De Gubernatis provides interesting comments on how Italy should seek commercial, religious and cultural influence in the Horn of Africa, as well as India in *Peregrinazioni indiane*. Moreover, De Gubernatis travelled to India via Italian Eritrea, the first Italian colony in the Horn of Africa, and in his travel writing he commented extensively on how Italy should expand his influence in the Horn of Africa and India, due to its privileged position in the Mediterranean and the new maritime routes opened up with the Suez Canal.[63] It is worth remembering in this context that, in the aftermath of the occupation of Libya in 1911, interest in Italian colonialism became more central in the agenda of the Italian government and in Italian industrialist circles, especially since in the first decade of the twentieth century, Italy had witnessed an industrial revolution. Gozzano began writing the letters at this moment in time, and published them in journals whose readers were eager to read about colonial themes and European adventures.

61 *Peregrinazioni indiane. India centrale*, pp. 231–2.
62 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 100.
63 De Gubernatis, *Peregrinazioni indiane. India centrale*, pp. 8, 26, 33.

Gozzano's Anglomania and largely positive depiction of British rule in India, I would argue, should be seen in the light of De Gubernatis' remarks above, and as a re-elaborated dream-like context for the projection of the Italian fantasy of imperial rule – even though the mocking attitude of Gozzano remains constantly in the background. The British are nevertheless the enablers of the fantasy, as well as the model for it, and it is no surprise that Gozzano ultimately depicts British imperialism as the active agent of regeneration. This is an opportunity to imagine what it might feel like to be a mighty European empire.

Gozzano's use of a poetics of contrasts is once again central to his portrayal of British imperialism.The dichotomy that shapes the narration is formed by the Indian 'barbarie pittoresca' [picturesque barbarism] on the one hand, and the British 'civiltà vittoriosa' [victorious civilisation] on the other.[64] The vitalism of British imperialism is considered by Gozzano in its attempt to challenge Indian spiritual and material decadence by introducing new European values and technological innovation into India. The representation of British rule is occasionally contradictory; at times, the reader questions whether Gozzano is truly on the British side. The language used to present aspects of British colonisation includes terms with negative connotations, such as 'schiavitù' [slavery]. However, Gozzano also minimises the negativity of such terms by balancing them with other terms that contradict them. For example, when he claims that 'i dominatori [the British] sanno sfruttare l'uomo fino all'ultima energia' [the rulers [the British] know how to exploit a man to the full], he then almost cancels out this statement by explaining that the British 'comandano con alterigia, ma con giustizia' [rule with arrogance but with justice].[65] According to Della Coletta, the ambivalence of Gozzano's attitude shows that he is both clinging admiringly to, and breaking away from, 'the heroic imperial history of a world that is inexorably moving towards its sunset'.[66] This interpretation is of course in line with Gozzano's general anti-historicist attitude and his consequent use of irony and ambiguity when dealing with the very notion of imperial

64 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 5.
65 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 6.
66 Della Coletta, *World's Fairs*, p. 207.

history as the First World War approaches (and is well under way at the time of the publication of the whole volume). At the same time, there is no doubt that *Verso la cuna* is supportive of European imperialism and fully exhibits an Anglomania popular in Italian Indic Orientalism: through the combination of the imperial 'activism' of the British and Indian pessimistic resignation, Gozzano's narration allows us to subtly deduce that there is no future for India without the British in it – the ideal argument to project the belated Italian fantasy of Euromania and empire.

The activities of the British in India include the development of commerce, the building of infrastructure, the defeat of the caste system, and the restoration of the Indian ruins. Bombay, the most British of the cities of India, is accordingly called the 'cuna dell'avvenire' [cradle of the future],[67] but wherever the European has brought the values of modernity, he has rendered the Indians 'meno infelici' [less unhappy].[68] European values are generally characterised by their rationality and practicality. While these values are contrasted with the more contemplative (and, by implication, lazy, lethargic and apathetic) Oriental civilisation, the idea of practicality is naturally inscribed in the structure of Western capitalism and its imperialist politics. This contrast between contemplative and practical civilisation is staged by comparing more Europeanised cities with other, more traditional Indian cities, such as Hyderabad. Here, for instance, 'lontani da Bombay, da Calcutta, dalle grandi città della costa, dove già si sovrappone ed impera la nostra pratica attività occidentale' [far from Bombay, Calcutta and the big cities of the coast, where our western practical activity already rules], the city 'vive nella sua favola millennaria, intatta come dieci secoli or sono' [lives in its millenarian fairy tale, intact as ten centuries ago].[69] Despite exerting less of an influence, British imperialism is still depicted as bringing benefits to an otherwise starving region:

> l'Inghilterra concede al regno d'Haiderabat … l'illusione di un'esistenza indipendente … il Nizzam, sovrano di Haiderabat, sa che invece di armati l'Inghilterra manda

67 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 15.
68 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 7.
69 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, pp. 91–2.

> sacchi di grano e che la carestia … si farebbe sentire ogni anno senza l'illimitata generosità dei custodi accerchianti.
>
> [England grants to the kingdom of Hyderabad the illusion of an independent existence. … Nizzam, sovereign of Hyderabad, knows that England, instead of armed men, sends sacks of wheat and that the famine … would be suffered every year without the unlimited generosity of the encircling keepers.][70]

Britain is depicted as injecting life into India by building infrastructure such as railways and by distributing crops by means of trains. In order to create an image of regeneration which would suggest an injection of blood, Gozzano likens the rail tracks built by the British to blood arteries, and the trains full of crops to blood: 'sarebbe … la fame classica se l'Inghilterra non avesse chiusa tutta l'India in una fitta rete ferroviaria, arterie nelle quali scorre, più vitale del sangue, … il grano giunto da tutte le parti del mondo' [there would be …. classic hunger if England had not constructed a close railway network in which it flows, more vital than blood, … the wheat arrived from all parts of the world].[71] Gozzano continuously hints at the contrast between Indian irrationalism and European rationalism by underscoring the benefits of the practical activity of the British and setting this against indigenous lethargy and the Indians' lack of gratitude towards their imperial rulers:

> Grano, grano infiniti sacchi tondeggianti che si accumulano in piramidi colossali ad ogni stazione piccola e grande. E il vecchio ottuagenario e il bimbo di sei anni, la danzatrice e il paria, tutti passano al dispensiere per la provvista quotidiana, senza nemmeno dir grazie, senza nemmeno capire da chi e perchè giunga quel bene. E quando ognuno ha ricevuta la sua misura di frumento, o di farina candida, attende all'occupazione prediletta: sognare.
>
> [wheat, wheat endless round sacks that are piled up in colossal pyramids at each station small or big. And the old eighty-year-old man and the six-year-old child, the dancer and the pariah, all of them go to the dispenser for the daily provisions, without saying thanks and without understanding from where and why those goods arrive.

70 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 92.
71 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 133.

> And when everyone has received their portion of wheat, or white flour, he attends to his dearest occupation: to dream.][72]

Gozzano portrays British imperialism as both beneficial to and desired by Indians. If Euromania is erected in the context of British imperialism and Anglomania, however, it is difficult not to see Gozzano's irony, leaving the reader wondering the extent to which the poet truly believes in what he writes. This notwithstanding, the ultimate image of India is shaped by Indophobia, and it is one in which the Indians are shown to enjoy British imperialism. The Indians are depicted as rejecting their own cultural and ethnic essence in order to embrace Englishness. Thus, according to the poet, 'l'India è inglese, vuole essere inglese' [India is English, desires to be English].[73] Although Gozzano's narrative is imbued with irony and ambiguity, the references to racial inferiority are explicitly manifested in the representation of the Indians' alleged Anglomania. Features of Indian Anglomania (an ironic reflection of Italian Anglomania?) include 'lo studente dell'università di Bombay o Calcutta' [the student of the university of Bombay or Calcutta] who 'si dà a sport nordici, intollerabili sotto il tropico, frena il suo gesto vivace, riduce la loquacità istintiva del suo dire alla più corretta freddezza' [practises northern sports intolerable under the tropical weather; cools down his lively gestures; and reduces his instinctive loquacity of his way of speaking to a more correct coldness].[74] Similarly, owing to this Anglomania, the daughters and wives of the Maharajas 's'imbiondiscono i capelli e s'imbiancano il volto' [bleach their hair blonde and make their face white].[75]

The historical inevitability of British imperialism in India is further reinforced by the portrayal of the caste system and the British attempt to abolish it. The paradox of history is staged by combining Anglomania with the Indian love of the caste system. Gozzano points out that 'due cose sono care all'indiano: l'Inghilterra e la sua casta. "L'India declina?

72 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 133.
73 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 83.
74 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 83.
75 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 83.

…" – "Poco importa l'India, … purchè sia salva la casta"' [Indians hold two things dear: England and the caste system. 'India is in decline? …' – 'India hardly matters, … as long as the caste is safeguarded'].[76] The irony lies, of course, in the depiction of British imperialism as the agent of destruction of the caste system. Gozzano gives an account of how, before the English domination, the pariah could not appear in sight of a Brahman as the latter had the faculty of killing him or making him a slave.[77] However, these acts of 'barbarism' have ceased to occur among those Indians whom, according to Gozzano, 'l'europeo … ha emancipati dalla crudeltà delle caste' [the European … has emancipated from the cruelty of the caste system].[78]

The regenerative effects of British rule are particularly evident in the restoration of the ruins of the dead civilisations of India. Tellingly, India is presented as a land continuously affected by colonisation, unable to achieve self-rule, and its contemporary state of decadence is in part considered to be the result of this. British colonialism, however, is seen as different from the previous forms of colonial rule and is considered to be equipped with the modern instruments capable of solving Indian miseries. Delhi, for instance, is portrayed as a mosaic of decrepit civilisations, and is said to have been 'morta e risorta dieci volte in quattro millenni, sotto dieci dominatori diversi' [dead and reborn again for ten times in four millennia, under ten different rulers].[79] The role of the British is to attempt to bring life to the city, and Gozzano again resorts to naturalist imagery to create a mocking picture of biological regeneration. Delhi is said to evolve 'come qualunque altra cosa viva, e rampollare qua e là sul suo ceppo decrepito, come la pianta che non vuol morire' [like any other living thing, and rise again here and there on the decayed stump, like the plant that does not want to die].[80] It is Britain that brings to life and fertilises the Indian plant: 'L'Inghilterra s'accinge ad un opera colossale: dissodare l'ossario delle città morte, restaraure le ruine, ordinarle decorosamente alla luce del

76 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 84.
77 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 86.
78 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 7.
79 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 107.
80 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 107.

sole' [England is going to do a colossal work: to dig out the ossuary of the dead cities, to restore to ruins, to order them properly in the open light of the sun].[81] Gozzano distinguishes between the part of Delhi already penetrated by Western civilisation, which he calls 'viva' [alive], and the part that is expecting British intervention, which he terms 'morta' [dead].[82] In the former, he finds 'le case abitate dagli uomini' [houses inhabited by men], while in the latter 'quelle popolate dalle scimmie' [those inhabited by monkeys].[83] The latter consists, of course, of 'l'immenso ossario [...] di ruine' [immense ossuary ... of ruins], while the former consists of 'ampie vie modernissime: luce elettrica, tram, automobili' [very modern large streets: electric light, trams, cars].[84]

Western technology, like all other examples of British intervention, revitalises a decadent India, but the possibilities of renewal remain ambiguously confined to the vitalising powers of British imperialism, which the Indians are made to experience as passive subjects. Gozzano is undoubtedly ironic in his depictions, but his emphasis on discontinuity, fragmentation and contradiction is the symptom of the malady he seeks to address: the malady of the European notion of history and its double aspect of progress and decadence, especially as European imperialism is gradually paving the way to the First World War and self-destruction. To the Italian bourgeois readership, he presents an imperial model to visualise and contemplate in all its historical necessities and contradictions, tainted by the melancholia of existentialism and the pessimism of the approaching crisis in world history. To a certain extent Gozzano's 'confusional' representation of India was driven by the attempt to address contrasting concerns: the crisis of European history driven by imperialism and its consequent philosophical pessimism; and Italy's belated participation and ambivalent position in such historical processes. Thus Gozzano's existentialist Orientalism, like Leopardi's, is an idiosyncratic product of Italian historical consciousness in its relationship with European philosophy and modernity, as well as world

81 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 113.
82 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 107.
83 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, p. 107.
84 Gozzano, *Verso la cuna del mondo*, pp. 105, 107.

affairs. Like Barrili's, Carducci's, but also Berchet's, Di Breme's, and indeed Marinetti's engagements with Orientalism, Gozzano's Orientalism is a sign of the time and a symptom of Italian aspirations and disappointments in relation to European history, culture and modernity. De Gubernatis provided Indological discursive frameworks in terms of historical thought and national perspective, and such a foundation enabled Gozzano to formulate a specifically Italian existentialist Orientalism representative of Italian historical and cultural (contradictory) specificities. All of the literary engagements with the Orient of the post-unification period, finally, are attempts to move beyond the parochial dimension of Classicism in Italy, and engage with global modernity to address the desires and fantasies of a young nation-state, with an illustrious past, eager to play a new role in Europe after centuries of subordination. Indeed, Indic Orientalism proved an effective tool in the discussion of the Italian cultural politics of identity, whose nationalist and racial potential was eventually fulfilled by the legacy of Orientalism and Aryanism in fascist culture from the 1930s onwards.

EPILOGUE

Orientalism and Propaganda in Fascist Italy: Nation, Race and Empire

In this epilogue, I explore fascist Orientalism and propaganda, and trace the legacy the Aryan idea in fascist conceptions of race, nation and empire. I look at how Orientalist ideas provided the foundation of fascist discriminatory identity discourses and legislation based on the Aryan idea. It is interesting to refer to Susanne Marchand encyclopaedic work on German Orientalism in order to get a sense of the racist potential of Orientalist philology and ideas; not because Marchand explains them, but precisely because she does not. Marchand discusses how the work of German Orientalists such as Franz Bopp marked 'one of the heartbreaking moments in the history of scholarship: the birth of the segregated Semitic and Indo-European languages from the spirit of philological positivism'. Interestingly, however, for Marchand this did not mean that 'Bopp was a racist or that oriental studies were destined to develop purely along racial lines'. It was clear, she however goes on to say, that 'the period after about 1820 did see the fleshing out of the language groupings sketched by William Jones and Frierdich Schlegel, in ways that led to the writing of various sorts of self-aggrandizing and exclusionary prehistories'.[1] There seems to be an intrinsic contradiction in Marchand's claim, as self-aggrandising is always conducted at the expense of an Other and as a result of hierarchisations. But what is most striking is that the scholarly attitude of Bopp Marchand describes is so evidently revealing of a racist potential. It is such potential that cannot be denied and that can be seen to have found a fulfilment in the race theory and legislation of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, though it had already served colonial and imperial purposes of racial discrimination

1 Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire*, p. 126.

in Orientalist and imperial discourses of other European empires. Whether Bopp, or indeed Italian Orientalists such as De Gubernatis, were actual racists – and certainly our analysis of De Gubernatis' work suggests that he was – is only partially relevant; undoubtedly their love of India was more related to their exaltation of European civilisation, racial progress, superiority and modernity than Indian civilisation. It is not incorrect to say, therefore, that European Orientalism, Indology and comparative philology, including their Italian expressions, constitute the intellectual foundation of racial and religious hierarchisations that led to institutional racism in fascist Italy, after receiving a further impulse from Nazi Germany.

It is the aim of this epilogue to demonstrate how dangerous and impactful some Orientalist ideas proved to be, and how biased Francesco Gabrieli was when he claimed, in his response to Abdel Malek, that European Orientalism was an entirely harmless phenomenon. Perhaps the way in which fascism appropriated Aryan racialism and turned it into legislation in the 1930s, and the way in which Gabrieli dismissed the legacy of Orientalism in modern racism and defended Orientalist scholarship in the 1960s, are part of the same extreme attitude stemming from a sense of marginality and belatedness in modern Italy. Perhaps these extreme attitudes are mere examples of modern Italy's 'histerical' relationship with European trends and political affairs in the light of a new marginality Italy felt in Europe from the post-Enlightenment period onwards. Indeed, the Italian nation remains, along with Germany, a case-study of the most extreme form of racial Aryanism in Europe. However, the path that led fascist Italy to this racial extreme was controversial and contradictory, partly due to fascist opportunism, but also due to the situation of in-betweenness presented by modern Italy, which was at times discriminated against by Aryanism as a Mediterranean country, and which gave rise to an anti-Aryan theory of Eurafricanism. Both the Indo-European and the Eurafrican theories proved valuable routes for Italy to engage with a racialised European modernity. Especially during the fascist years, Italian engagement with race theory was simultaneously and contradictorily based on notions of assimilation and exclusion, or anti-racism and racism, that were in line with fascist imperial ambitions and foreign policy. It is therefore important to establish how, under fascism,

Aryanism and Mediterraneanism came together in the work of Indologist Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, who invented the Aryan-Mediterranean race to provide a racial middle ground for Italians. At the same time, the two foremost Indologists of the fascist years, Carlo Formichi and Giuseppe Tucci, while continuing to draw parallels between Italy and India as Aryan sisters in their more independent work, also wrote works of propaganda that aimed to establish links between fascism and Indian nationalism, especially in relation to their anti-British sentiment, by claiming that Britain was exploitative and racist, whereas fascist Italy was anti-racist and, in the tradition of ancient Rome, functioned as a bridge between East and West. These contradictory and bombastic developments, however, show one common trajectory, that Indology, Orientalist thought, and the Aryan and Mediterranean ideas played a crucial role in fascist propaganda and discourses of nation, race and empire.

Pullè and the Aryan-Mediterranean idea

Francesco Lorenzo Pullè made significant links between philology, linguistics and the physical sciences in order to create his anthropological profile of Italy as an Aryan-Mediterranean nation. As early as 1898, he developed his argument that the pre-Roman linguistic and ethnic make-up of Italy represented the basis on which to analyse the linguistic and ethnological families of contemporary Italy. Graziadio Isaia Ascoli's work on the Italian dialects constituted Pullè's starting point. Pullè, however, placed an even greater emphasis than Ascoli on the correspondence between dialectology and somatology, two disciplines which, as Pullè tells us, became integrated in the field of anthropological study. Pullé thought it necessary to study the linguistic history of Italy if glottology in particular was to be used as a valid criteria of ethnic study. Thus, he studied in depth dialectology and Italian idioms in relation to their pre-Roman origin, establishing a correlation between the areas of the current dialectical varieties and the 'posizione delle lingue dei popoli anteriori alla romanizzazione dell'Italia' [locations of the languages of the peoples inhabiting the

Italian peninsula prior to its Romanisation]. The correspondence between the ancient linguistic and ethnographic domains and the contemporary dialectical domains, as they coincide with the somatological types, including height and the cephalic index, enables the scholar, Pullè argues, to 'indurre la ragione etnologica che presiedè alla formazione e conservazione dei rispettivi tipi' [deduce the ethnological reason that determined the formation and conservation of the respective types].[2] By following such an approach, Pullé reinforced the link between language and race that had come under scrutiny by the turn of the century, but that still evoked great fascination.

Pullè brought together his findings about the Aryan-Mediterranean ethnicity of Italians in his more comprehensive study on the languages and anthropology of Italy, *Italia. Genti e favelle* (1927), published when Italy was under fascist rule. Not yet a racist dictatorship, Italian fascism had been influenced by idealism and had grown in opposition to positivism. Nevertheless, in his work, Pullè continued to embrace a positivist approach, and his strain of thought is representative of how positivism continued to prosper during the years of neo-idealism in Italy. Moreover, the exposition of the ethnic and linguistic make up of Italy was different to that proposed by Ascoli or even Cattaneo, and the focus of analysis was less on the Aryan-Semitic divide than on the Aryan-Mediterranean divide. Crucially, Pullè's emphasis was on the harmonisation of internal difference to unify and regenerate the nation in the context of a more extreme fascist nationalism than the patriotism of the Risorgimento or of the immediate post-unification years. Pullé's Orientalism sought to satisfy the fascist rhetoric of the Romanisation of the Italian peninsula as a trope of unification and assimilation: like fascism, fascist Orientalism was attempting an anthropological unification of Italy by bringing together Aryans and Mediterraneans (and northern and southern Italians) under Roman unification. The starting point for Pullè is of course language as he argues that Latin is the basis of all Italian tongues: 'il latino, mantenendo incolume il proprio tipo logico o morfologico, si sia tradotto, perpetuandosi, nella grande molticiplità dei parlare italiani' [while maintaining unscathed logical or morphological type, Latin was translated,

2 Pullé, 'Profilo antropologico d'Italia', p. 22.

and perpetuated itself, in a great multiplicity of Italian dialects].[3] Instead of an emphasis on difference – Ascoli's real objective – the emphasis is now on affinity, that is, on Latin as the common element of all Italian dialects, and hence the linguistic foundation of the Italian nation. From the linguistic dimension, it was possible to derive the Roman ethnic foundation of Italy as Rome itself had been the product of the linguistic and ethnic fusion between Aryans and Mediterraneans.

Pullè's work was, of course, a response to Sergi's Mediterranean critique of Aryanism, which by now had also influenced Italian professional Orientalism. In his attempt to reconcile Indo-Europeans and Eurafricans, Pullè even employed Giuseppe Sergi's jargon. For Pullè, the spread of Aryan languages in Europe had to be interpreted in light of the ways in which 'i conquistatori eurasici o arianoidi avian fatto prevalere la propria favella sotto la quale gli idiomi degli indigeni euroafricani mediterranei si affievolirono e infine si spensero' [the Eurasian or Aryan conquerors had made their own language prevail over the Eurafrican and Mediterranean languages].[4] Philology, and not only dialectology and somatology, provided the data for such ethnic conclusions. Pullè aimed to reconcile Aryanism and Mediterraneanism in order to trace, through Roman history and linguistic and ethnic fusion, the ethnic history of Italian unification, evolution and expansion:

> Arii e Mediterranei, secondo la accezione del Sergi di questi termini, si composero in una costituzione nuova e potente così da dominare ed informare i futuri destini umani della Penisola, e per lunga tratta quelli delle circostanti nazioni.
>
> [Aryans and Mediterraneans, according to Sergi's definitions of these terms, mixed in a new and powerful way so as to dominate and form the destinies of the peninsula, and for a long time those of the surrounding nations.][5]

As Aryans and Mediterraneans converge in the creation of ancient Romans, the Italics – the ethnic root of both Romans and Italians – are described

3 Francesco Lorenzo Pullè, *L'Italia, genti e favelle: Disegno antropologico-linguistico* (Turin: Bocca, 1927), 2 vols, i, p. xvi.

4 Pullè, *L'Italia, genti e favelle*, i, p. xviii.

5 Pullè, *L'Italia, genti e favelle*, i, pp. 2–3.

as the Mediterranean branch of the Aryan family. The formation of the idea of an Aryan-Mediterranean race is representative of the attempt to fuse all contrasting ethnic elements within the nation – a fusion necessary for Pullè to accomplish the Italic palingenesis of fascism. Pullè provides a psychological and somatological account of the fusion, which built on the philological findings, and showed a similar dynamic of interaction as the one already seen between Aryan and Mediterranean languages:

> L'organismo psichico ario se ne è venuto informando e riformando, come l'organismo somatico. A momenti diversi della fusione ora la psicologia degli indigeni mediterranei ha prevalso su quella degli immigrati, ora quella dei conquistatori superò la psicologia dei conquistati, dopo che nell'attrito la rozzezza primitiva si fu temperata. Da ciò la continuità di una vita progressiva ... la palingenesi della civiltà italica, nelle lunghe sue fasi millenarie.
>
> [The Aryan psychic organism was formed and re-formed, like the somatic organism. At different times during the fusion, the psychology of the Mediterranean natives prevailed over that of the immigrants, or that of the conquerors prevailed over that of the conquered. Hence the continuation of a progressive life ... the palingenesis of Italic civilisation, in its long millenarian phases.][6]

This rhetoric of reconciliation, fusion and unification was what characterised the metaphorical and symbolical worlds of fascism in the attempt to overcome internal conflict in Italy and to 'complete' the unification process through the trope of Rome and Roman assimilation.

Pullé's work is obviously mere rhetoric and can be safely referred to as professional Orientalism at the service of fascist ideology. Interestingly, though, at this stage of fascism, and certainly until 1936, the rhetoric of fascism in relation to race was primarily assimilationist or anti-racist, and based on the notion of Roman ethnic fusion and unification. However, as we will see, Pullè's work would be appropriated in 1936 by fascist race theorists such as Giulio Cogni, and would be used in support of fascist racist propaganda based on Aryanism after the fascist racist turn.[7] Thus,

6 Pullè, *L'Italia, genti e favelle*, i, p. 12.

7 See Giulio Cogni's *Il razzismo* (Paris-Milan: Bocca, 1936) and *I valori della stirpe italiana* (Milan: Bocca, 1937).

from 1936 onwards, and especially from 1938, with the publication of the *Manifesto della Razza*, fascist racial attitudes would take two directions paradoxically but opportunistically entailing both anti-racism and racism, and Mediterraneanism and Aryanism. It is, therefore, interesting to explore how Orientalist ideas, and Aryanism in the first instance, became an integral part of racial thought in fascist Italy in conjunction with the regime's rhetoric and attitudes in domestic, foreign and colonial policies. However, to begin with, it is crucial to understand how up until 1936 fascist Italy attempted to distinguish itself as an anti-racist nation.

Fascist *Romanità*, Mediterranean reclamation and anti-racism

The anti-racist phase of Italian fascism was based on notions of Roman or Latin ethnic assimilationism. If Pullè's work had tried to reconcile contrasting ethnic theories, the establishment of Nazi aryanism from 1933 triggered further anti-Aryan and anti-racist rhetoric in fascist Italy. The early fascist criticism of Aryanism, and especially Nazi Aryanism, was conducted by a disciple of Giuseppe Sergi, the physician Nicola Pende, and developed on the basis of Sergi's anti-Aryanist and anti-Orientalist Mediterranean theory. In Pende's jargon, Aryanism is tantamount to Nordicism or racism, and is opposed to Latinism which signifies anti-racism and assimilationism. In his *Bonifica umana razionale e biologia politica* (1933), for instance, Pende criticised the idea of a pure Germanic race and stressed that the fascists' approach to the political problem of the race revealed a 'equilibrio realistico mediterraneo' [realistic Mediterranean equilibrium] as opposed to a 'misticismo nordico' [Nordic mysticism].[8] In support of his anti-Aryanism, Pende even quotes from Mussolini's speeches, in which the line of fascism on race, particularly in relation to Nazi Aryanism, seems quite unequivocable:

8 Nicola Pende, *Bonifica umana razionale e biologia politica* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1933), p. 227.

> Non esiste più alcuna razza pura, e neppure gl'israeliti sono rimasti senza mescolarsi. Precisamente da felici mescolanze sono spesso derivate la forza e la bellezza d'una Nazione. Razza: ciò è sentimento, non realtà, io non crederò mai che possano dimostrarsi razze più o meno pure biologicamente.
>
> [No pure race exists any longer and even the Jews have mixed with other races. It is precisely thanks to successful race-mixing that the strength and beauty of a Nation have often been derived. Race: it is a feeling, not a reality. I will never believe that races can be shown to be more or less biologically pure.][9]

Sergi's critique of Aryanism and his idea of Mediterranean unity found a staunch supporter in Pende through the latter's emphasis on Roman unification and concepts of human reclamation and biological politics. In 1928, Pende founded the Biotypological-Orthegenetical Institute at Genoa University, where he pioneered a distinctive type of eugenics: orthogenesis, or the science of constitutionalism. This science, through 'changes in nutrition' or 'hormonal balance' aimed 'to monitor individual or collective development'.[10] Pende combined anthropology with sociology, pathology, biology and other sciences with the aim of achieving racial improvement. In Pende's project, no barrier to racial mixing was imposed. On the contrary, according to him, Rome 'costruì il suo grande Stato' [built its great State] and 'civiltà latina' [Latin civilisation] through ethnic fusion and its 'grande potenza assimilatrice, trasformatrice, unificatrice' [great assimilative, transformative, unifying power]. 'La latinità' [Latinness], Pende continues, 'è essenzialmente dovuta alla fusione dei valori di tutte le stirpi italiche e sopratutto delle stirpi di razza mediterranea, che Roma seppe armonizzare e fondere' [is essentially due to the fusion of the values of all the Italic stocks, and above all of the Mediterranean stocks, which Rome was able to harmonise and fuse].[11] Ancient Rome's ideals of universalism and assimilation are exalted in order to contrast both the new German fascist and racist power, as well

9 Mussolini, cited in Nicola Pende, *Bonifica umana*, p. 227.

10 Aaron Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 47.

11 Pende, *Bonifica umana*, p. 225.

as Britain, where imperial Rome had been used to discuss notions of decline and the assimilation of imperial subjects in the British empire, particularly in India.[12]

British historians such as James Bryce, for instance, had argued that the decline of the Roman empire had occurred as a result of the fusion of the Romans with other races. This fusion of the Romans had occurred primarily through the granting of Roman citizenship to subjects of all ethnicities (on the grounds they were ethnically similar to the Romans).[13] Imperial Britain could not afford to make a similar mistake in India. Roman universalism and its ethnic fusion was thus dismissed as inappropriate for imperial Britain if decline was to be avoided.[14] Bryce's comparisons between the Roman empire and the British empire in India had, of course, been informed by the comparative method of Orientalism. As Javeed Majeed has shown, Bryce's comparative attitudes were inspired by the new comparative trend established by William Jones with his comparisons between Sanskrit, Latin and Greek.[15] The comparisons between Sanskrit and Latin as ancient Indo-European languages pointed to the comparisons between Rome and India as ancient civilisations. By comparing the ancient Roman empire with the British empire in India, Bryce pointed to some aspects of the contemporary antiquity of India which he set against the modernity of Britain. These comparisons, moreover, linked ancient Rome and modern Britain as the ancient and modern expressions of European imperialism,

12 James Bryce, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India: The Diffusion of Roman and English Law throughout the World* (Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1914). See also Evelyn Cromer, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (London: Murray, 1910); Charles Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1912).

13 Bryce, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in*, pp. 39–40.

14 At the heart of Bryce rhetoric there was the modern notion of race according to which the British were superior to the ancient Romans and to all ancient races. Hence, the British were even in greater danger than the Romans if miscegenation were to take place with an 'ancient' race like the Indian.

15 Javed Majeed, 'Comparativism and References to Rome in British Imperial Attitudes to India', in Catherine Edwards, ed., *Roman Presences. Receptions of Rome in European Culture 1789–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 88–110 (90).

pointing to European progress and British racial modernity versus Indian stagnation and racial inferiority. What was at stake through all these civilisational comparisons was indeed the idea of race. Bryce paid a great deal of attention to the different practices of ethnic fusion and assimilation in the Roman and British empires. For Bryce, the ancient Roman subjects would find a 'similarity of conditions which pointed to and ultimately effected the fusion of the peoples'. However, Bryce insisted, 'in the case of England there is a dissimilarity which makes the fusion of the peoples of India impossible'.[16] In British India, Bryce concludes, racial difference is too great for British rulers to fuse with Indian subjects. As I have argued elsewhere, Bryce's dialectic between Roman assimilationism and British ethnic distancing from the Indian subject had a considerable impact in fascist Italy. If the fascists had been using the trope of Rome to develop their rhetoric of unification and fascistisation, Bryce arguments suited them well as they now could use British racism to set fascism apart as an anti-racist doctrine based on Roman assimilation and ethnic fusion.[17]

Indeed, in the post-Versailles years, Bryce's book contributed to the shaping of anti-British propaganda in Italy. Anti-British (but also anti-French) feelings among Italian intellectuals and politicians began to arise as a result of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which many felt had left Italy empty-handed, despite the agreements of the London Treaty of 1915 about territorial re-distribution. Although the consolidation of Italian rule in East and North Africa, up to the conquest of Libya, had occurred with British support, post-Versailles Italy sought to acquire more independence from Britain in matters of foreign policy and colonialism, to the point of challenging Britain for control of the Mediterranean from 1935 onwards. The notion of Roman assimilation was well suited to supporting Italian Mediterranean expansionism, especially because the British had criticised it. From the 1920s onwards, but particularly in the aftermath of the occupation

16 Bryce, *The Roman Empire*, pp. 58–9.

17 See Fabrizio De Donno, 'Orientalism and Classicism: The British-Roman Empire of Lord Bryce and His Italian Critics', in C. Bayly and P. F. Bang, eds, *Tributary Empires in Global History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 48–73.

of Ethiopia in 1935, fascism developed anti-British attitudes and campaigns, especially in relation to India.

In his *Imperialismo romano e politica italiana* (1920), the historian of Rome Ettore Pais extolled Roman assimilation and universalism as superior to British racism.[18] He also elaborated on likely future revolts in India and Egypt, thereby alluding to Italian anti-British support for these regions.[19] The idea of Roman universalism constituted the rhetoric used by several Italian commentators to legitimate fascism's sympathy towards Indian, Palestinian and Egyptian nationalisms, as well as towards Zionism (although the fascists eventually turned from Zionism to anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism in 1936). Pais applied the idea of universalism in the context of the unification of East and West – a process, the historian claimed, that need not necessarily be accompanied by colonial conquest – in which Italy and the Mediterranean function as a bridge. In the Italian colonial context, on the other hand, Pais makes reference to a new special Italian citizenship created for the natives in 1919, and compares this event with the 'sapienza con cui Roma si assimilò tutte le genti bagnate dal Mediterraneo' [wisdom with which Rome assimilated all the Mediterranean peoples].[20]

With the Nazi seizure of power in Germany and Hitler's implementation of state racism, Italy's potential as a more appealing candidate for collaboration with Asian and African nationalisms suddenly increased thanks to fascist anti-racist propaganda.[21] The fascists implemented the same anti-

18 Ettore Pais, *Imperialismo romano e politica italiana* (Milan: Hoepli, 1920), p. 200.

19 Pais, *Imperialismo romano*, p. xlvii.

20 Pais, *Imperialismo romano*, p. 124. See also Gennaro Mondaini, *La legislazione coloniale italiana nel suo sviluppo storici e nel suo stato attuale, 1881–1940* (Milan: Istituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1941), pp. 35–6.

21 Generally speaking, fascism viewed the growth of Asian and African independence movements in various parts of the British empire in the 1920s and 1930s as a good opportunity to increase fascist power and influence. As a fascist political historian of the time declared, 'più diminiuisce il potere delle altre nazioni europee nella gerarchia del mondo, di più aumenta il nostro' [the more the power of other European nations decreases in the world's hierarchy, the more it increases ours]. See Valdo Ferretti, 'Cultura e politica: l'IsMeo durante il regime fascista', in *Storia contemporanea*, 1986, 7:779–819 (781).

racist idea already used to criticise British rule in India to undermine the potential of Germany as a partner in the Asian and African struggle for independence. A note to Mussolini from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs concerning fascist relations with the Orient read that, because of its racial policies and ideas, 'la Germania perdeva un'opportunità con i nazionalismi asiatici e africani' [Germany was missing an opportunity with Asian and African nationalisms]. This was the same idea of race, the note argued, used by the British to draw a line of demarcation between themselves and the natives. This idea was in contrast to 'l'idea universale di Roma imperiale e Cattolica e del pensiero italiano dal rinascimento al Fascismo' [the universal idea of Imperial and Catholic Rome and of Italian thought from the Renaissance to Fascism].[22] The anti-British actions taken by Mussolini in Palestine, Egypt and India were significant. In 1933, Mussolini established contacts with the Mufti of Jerusalem and other Arab leaders to offer support against the British in Palestine and Egypt.[23] At the same time, he established contacts with Zionist leaders such as Chajm Wiezmann, Victor Jacobson and Nahum Solokov, and led them to believe that he could help their cause and be a mediator between Hitler and the Jews.[24] Such contacts between fascism and Zionism were maintained up until 1936, when the alliance with Germany, pan-Arabism and a temporary agreement with Britain, made Zionism no longer attractive to Mussolini .[25] From the early 1930s, fascism also established contacts with Indian nationalism, and Mussolini offered support to Subhas Chandra Bose's project regarding the 'fondazione di una lega internazionale delle nazioni oppresse' [foundation of an international league of oppressed nations].[26] In all these contexts, Italian fascism's alleged anti-racism, the rhetoric of Rome as the traditional bridge between East and West, and the tropes of Aryanism, Islamism and Zionism, were used, often in contradictory terms, in fascist anti-British propaganda.

22 'Note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs', in Renzo De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente; arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), pp. 28–9.
23 De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente*, pp. 29–30.
24 De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente*, pp. 138–43.
25 De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente*, p. 182.
26 De Felice, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente*, p. 206.

Mazzini and Gandhi: Fascist propaganda and Indian nationalism

With regard to fascist anti-British propaganda in India, the association between Mazzini and Gandhi proved particularly widespread and worthy of mention as it will re-appear in Indological propaganda and racial discourse, especially in the 1940s. It is important to spell out those elements of Mazzini's and Italian nationalist ideology which converged into fascist rhetoric of anti-colonial collaboration with oppressed Eastern nations. The contribution of Mazzini's ideas of cosmopolitan nationalism, whereby nations support each other in the context of humanity, for instance, was appropriated by both post-unification nationalists and fascists. Mazzini's 'religion of humanity' and ideas of insurrection constitute, together with socialism, one of the intellectual bases of Enrico Corradini's proletarian nationalism.[27] Corradini applied the socialist notion of solidarity among subordinated classes to nations, and called for solidarity among proletarian nations to rise against plutocratic nations such as Great Britain. Proletarian nations, according to Corradini, must react against the materialist imperialism of plutocratic nations, and develop spiritual forms of imperialism in which the doctrines of national consciousness and internationalism are conceived in religious (Mazzinian) terms.[28] The fascists, too, building on the legacy of Mazzinian thought in Italian nationalism, appropriated Mazzini's ideas. For Mussolini, Mazzini could not be considered a democrat: 'I suoi metodi non erano certo democratici. Egli era molto coerente nei fini, ma quante volte è stato incoerente e mutevole nella scelta dei mezzi?' [his

27 Enrico Corradini, *Il nazionalismo italiano* (Milan: Treves, 1914), pp. 14, 34. Italian nationalism was erected on the notion of Italy as a 'proletarian nation'. Enrico Corradini, the leading Italian nationalist, developed this idea in the 1910s. He applied to nations the socialist notion of solidarity among subordinated classes, and claimed that, just as subordinated classes are proletarian classes, so subordinated nations are proletarian nations. Thus, international socialism is transformed into national socialism, and Italy and all the other subordinated nations become proletarian nations. While in Italian colonial ideology, Italy is seen as taking a leading role in the struggle of proletarian nations, the fascists appropriate the same rhetoric for propaganda activities concerning foreign and anti-British policies.

28 Corradini, *Il nazionalismo italiano*, pp. 14, 34 and 53.

methods were certainly not democratic. He was very coherent in the ends, but how many times had he been incoherent and changeable in the choice of the means?][29] Mussolini saw in Mazzini a precursor of the violent and totalitarian means employed by fascism. More crucially, in pursuing the notion of Roman universalism, the fascists combined Mazzini's thought with the concept of Mediterranean regeneration to discuss Italy's position in Europe. For instance, Italy's and Rome's central role in Mazzini's 'Young Europe' project, as well as in the ideas of the 'Association of Nations' and 'Humanity', were all notions which Mussolini adopted to express his views on Italy's international duties in the 'New Europe'. According to the fascists, Italy ought to represent the ideals of 'Liberty and Nationality' for oppressed peoples. These should be the principles informing each event of Italy's international life and duties. This was Italy's and Rome's new 'mission' in the world.[30] Thus, Corradini's proletarian nationalism, Mazzini's (Eurocentric) universalism, and Roman assimilationalism were all used by fascist commentators to promote both national unity within facist Italy and collaboration between fascism and Asian and African (anti-British) nationalisms by means of anti-racist rhetoric, despite the fact that in the fascist African colonies, from 1937 onwards, racial discrimination was encouraged and even enshrined in legislation.[31]

29 Benito Mussolini, *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, 12 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1934), i, p. 192.

30 Romualdo Rossi, *Mazzini e il fascismo. Sintesi critica e polemica* (Livorno: Massima Editrice, 1931), p. 55.

31 In the colonial context, in 1934 a new law was promulgated in Libya to grant special Italian citizenship to all Muslim subjects. The law was in line with the fascist policy of pan-Arabism in the Mediterranean and India. On the other hand, in Eritrea and Somalia, a law relating to mixed-raced children was implemented in 1933, according to which Italian citizenship would be granted on the basis of racial features. In other words, as the Orientalist and anthropologist literature of the period shows, despite fascist claims of anti-racism, racialism in the East African colonies, although not yet institutional, was a reality linked to the 'needs' of colonial administration. See Gennaro Mondaini, *La legislazione colonial italiana*, pp. 33; and Giuanluca Gabrieli, 'Un aspetto della politica razzista dell'impero: "il problema dei meticci"', in *Passato e presente*, 1997, 41: 77–105.

Furthermore, it should be borne in mind that Mazzini himself had proved hugely influential in Indian nationalism from the 1830s to the 1940s. As I have shown elsewhere, Mazzini was interpreted both in violent and non-violent ways by different factions of Indian nationalists. The Indian moderates led by Surendranath Banerjee, for instance, had embraced the more moderate ways of Mazzini's thought. From the start of the twentieth century, however, the extremist faction had begun to promote the more messianic and bloody aspects of Mazzini's doctrine. These Indian 'Mazzinian' revolutionaries, led by Damodar Savarkar, had conducted terrorist campaigns from 1909, while referring to Mazzini's claims that violence was legitimate if used for a just cause. These extremists thus called upon Indians to take up arms and fight for Indian freedom and independence in the name of Mazzini and in the light of the achieved Italian independence. Most famously, Gandhi dedicated a chapter in his seminal work *Hind Swaraj* (1909) to Mazzini and Italy, in order to show that Mazzini was a non-violent agitator, and to deter Indians from following the more extreme aspects of Mazzini's doctrine, whose ambivalence meant that both violent and non-violent interpretations were possible. By depicting Mazzini as non-violent, and Italian freedom as the working of armies rather than the will and action of the people, Gandhi hoped to encourage Indians to abandon violent means and engage with his non-violent doctrine of passive resistance or *Satyagraha*. Gandhi thus deliberately described Mazzini's democratic nationalism through the lens of his own concept of self-rule in order to give the impression that Mazzini's notion of duty and sacrifice paralleled his own notions of self-rule and passive resistance, even though the respective doctrines differed dramatically. At the same time, Gandhi appropriated many aspects of Mazzini's thought in disguise, especially Mazzini's concept of democratic nationalism as a religion of humanity.[32]

In fascist Italy, Gandhi's engagement with Mazzini (and the affinities between the two) were used by Orientalists and commentators to

32 Fabrizio De Donno, 'The Gandhian Mazzini: Democratic Nationalism, Self-Rule and Non-violence', in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism*, eds E. Biagini and C. Bayly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 375–98.

bring Indian nationalism closer to fascism.[33] The first noteworthy step towards such a project of support dated back to 1931, when Gandhi met with Mussolini. Gandhi's trip to Italy had been organised by the Italian consul in Calcutta, Gino Scarpa.[34] According to Gianni Sofri, Mussolini was keen to show Gandhi that *Gandhism* and Indian nationalism shared similar values with fascism. These included ideas of rigid discipline and social revolution, as well as a strong nationalist spirit.[35] Gandhi was shown some of the Roman institutions believed to be most representative of fascist pursuits, though Gandhi was quick to conclude that fascism and its concerns with violence were not an appropriate route on which to embark for the support of Indian freedom.[36] In this context, it is crucial to say that comparisons between Gandhi and Mussolini had already been made by journalist Mario Appelius writing in 1925. Charles Burdett has discussed Appelius' travel writing *India* (1925), and has shown how Appelius wrote about an interview he had had with Gandhi, in which the Italian compared him to Mussolini and Lenin, as the three of them had come to 'prominence owing to the carnage and suffering of war', each had 'indicated the means of salvation to his people' and 'inspired and defined a revolution'.[37] The idea that Mazzini had had an impact on Gandhi's thought and that the two great patriots displayed striking similarities, however, remained the prime topic the fascist employed in discussions of anti-British support for India. In the year in which Gandhi met with Mussolini, several accounts of the alleged similarities between Mazzini and Gandhi were published by fascist supporters. Two in particular are worth mentioning: that of the Orientalist Giuseppe De Lorenzo and that of the fascist hierarch Roberto Farinacci. In his *Oriente ed Occidente* (1931), De Lorenzo presents a series of parallels between Italy and India. India, like Italy, is said to have achieved unification and independence twice in its history, under the emperor Asoko and then

33 Giuseppe De Lorenzo, *Oriente ed Occidente* (Bari: Laterza, 1931), pp. 10–15, and Roberto Farinacci, 'Gandhi e i suoi critici', *La vita italiana*, 38 (1931), 381–6 (383).

34 Gianni Sofri, *Gandhi in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988), p. 27.

35 Sofri, *Gandhi in Italia*, p. 28.

36 Sofri, *Gandhi in Italia*, Chapters 1–3.

37 Burdett, *Journeys Through Fascism*, p. 65.

under the Moguls. India was subsequently divided into several countries, like the Italy of the sixteenth century, and, as in the case of Italy, the idea of Indian unity was kept alive only in the arts and thought. Gandhi, like Mazzini, is said to be able to achieve a 'Risorgimento indiano' [Indian Risorgimento], a third moment of unification and independence, by uniting the different castes, religions and languages of India.[38] Gandhi is thus compared to Mazzini, 'non per i mezzi, ma per i fini' [not for the means, but the ends], and is brought closer, by implication, to fascism's 'unifying mission' in Italy and the world.[39] Farinacci's account, too, proposes parallels between the Risorgimento and the Indian struggle for independence. He stresses that the Italians are able to identify with the Indian cause and that, therefore, they cannot minimise 'l'ideale che Gandhi persegue' [the ideal that Gandhi pursues].[40] Like the Indian nationalists, the Italians gave heroes and martyrs to the cause of national independence. Farinacci obviously ignores the non-violent means of Gandhi's ideal of freedom and calls him 'il Mazzini del suo popolo' [the Mazzini of his people]. Gandhi's greatest merit is said to have been his affirmation of 'il valore delle libertà dello spirito … nel mondo del determinismo meccanico' [the value of the liberty of the spirit … in the world of mechanical determinism].[41] Therefore, while stressing Gandhi's idea of spiritual freedom – and ignoring passive resistance – Farinacci brings Gandhi closer to Mazzini and fascism's alleged spiritual mission.

Indology, anti-racism and fascist propaganda: Formichi and Tucci

After the occupation of Ethiopia and the proclamation of the empire in 1936, India came to occupy a more significant place in fascist policies because of the heightened tensions between Italy and Britain. The Orientalist Carlo Formichi, for instance, established many geographical, civilisational and

38 See Giuseppe De Lorenzo, *Oriente ed Occidente*, p. 11.
39 De Lorenzo, *Oriente ed Occidente*, p. 14.
40 Farinacci, 'Gandhi e i suoi critici', p. 383.
41 Farinacci, 'Gandhi e i suoi critici', p. 386.

political affinities between Italy and India, particularly their status as enemies of Britain.[42] As early as 1923, he had published a work of Indological scholarship on Buddhism's role in the relationship between emperor Asoka, Indian unification and the practical matters of the state. With its emphasis on interiority and the fusion of the individual with higher entities, Buddhist ethics are said to be crucial for the inner unification of a people within the framework of the state. Formichi went on to argue that Asoka unified India through Buddhism and enabled the 'benessere sociale' [social welfare] and 'la proseprità dello stato' [the prosperity of the state].[43] Indology was of course at the mercy of fascism by now, appropriating Buddhist doctrine to give plausibility and legitimacy to fascist notions of the spirit, ethics and the state. Formichi's discussions of the Buddhist state echo, of course, fascist philosopher Giovanni Gentile's notion of the fascist totalitarian state, which he went on to develop in detail in his famous *Che cos'è il fascismo* (1925).[44] These parallels between Italy and India in fascist Indology became instrumental in the development of Indo-Italian relations with the establishment of an Indo-Italian Institute in 1933 – though 'India' did not feature in the name of the institute, which was named IsMeo (Istituto per il Medio e l'Estremo Oriente [Institute for the Middle and Far East]) in order not to attract British suspicion. The institute became the prime point of exchange and mediation between fascism and Indian nationalism. The Indologist Giuseppe Tucci was the main figure behind the institute's constitution, which included the following cultural exchanges with India: exchanges of students; awards of scholarships for Indian students in Italy; and archaeological research in India and Italy, given the cultural similarities of the two countries.[45] Interestingly, on various occasions, Tucci made remarks about the alleged inclination of Gandhi and Indian nationalism to associate themselves with either the Bolshevik or the fascist 'revolutions'.[46]

42 Carlo Formichi, *L'Ora dell'India* (Rome: De Carlo, 1942), p. 10–11.
43 Carlo Formichi, *Apologia del Buddhismo* (Rome: Formiggini, 1923), pp. 79–83.
44 Giovanni Gentile, *Che cos'è il fascismo* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1925).
45 Valdo Ferretti, 'Cultura e Politica: L'IsMeo durante il regime fascista', *Storia Contemporanea*, 5 (1986), 779–819 (781).
46 Tucci, in Ferretti, 'Cultura e Politica', p. 785.

In another text of fascist Indology written almost twenty years later, when fascism was at war with Britain, Formichi addressed the cause of Indian nationalism as part of the Anglo-Italian tensions more explicitly, and once again a parallel between Indian nationalism and the fascist revolution is made. Formichi's *L'ora dell'India* (1942) is an excellent example of the encounter between epistemology and propaganda – when knowledge is in the sole service of power. In this work, Formichi puts the Indo-Italian relations that had been growing since the 1930s into perspective, especially in terms of anti-British campaigns. He reminds both Indians and Italians that

> L'Italia non ha alcuna ambizione nè politica nè territoriale sui paesi dell'India. Un solo movente la guida, chiaro e confessabile: interpretare anche nei riguardi dell'India la consegna che il Duce ha assegnato alla terza incarnazione di Roma: promuovere, instaurare e difendere nel mondo il regno della maggiore giustizia. ... Il 22 dicembre 1933, riunendosi ... nella sala di Cesare, il Duce, ... dopo aver ricordato che ... Roma aveva realizzato sulle rive del Mediterraneo una unione dell'Occidente con l'Oriente che aveva il massimo peso nella storia del mondo ..., affermava che soltanto quando questa unità della civiltà mediterranea, che era Oriente e Occidente, era stata infranta dal nascere di una civiltà a carattere ... materialistico extramediterraneo, soltanto allora i rapporti tra Occidente e Oriente erano diventati di semplice subordinazione e di convenienza materiale spegnendosi ogni vincolo di collaborazione creativa.
>
> [Italy has neither political nor territorial ambitions in India. Only one motive guides it [Italy], clear and confessable: to perform even in regard to India the duty which the Duce has assigned to the third incarnation of Rome: to promote, establish and defend justice in the world. ... On 22 December, during the meeting in the room 'Caesar', and after remembering that ... Rome had achieved the unity between the West and the Orient on the shores of the Mediterranean – a unity that had had maximum weight in world history – the Duce affirmed that only when the unity of Mediterranean civilisation, which was East and West, had been broken by the birth of a new and non-Mediterranean civilisation, only then did the relationship between East and West become one of subordination and material convenience, thus destroying any creative collaboration.][47]

Formichi draws once again parallels between India and Italy as ancient civilisations ruled by foreigners for centuries, and thereby emphasises how

47 Formichi, *L'Ora dell'India*, p. 14–15.

India, like Italy, will achieve greatness again through independence and rebirth.[48] He claims that it is fascism's duty to contribute to the Indian awakening by offering anti-British support. He praises the nationalist Subhas Chandra Bose – with whom Mussolini developed his most concrete attempt to offer anti-British support to Indian nationalism – and his doctrine of *Camyavada* [harmony], which 'tenta di creare punti di contatto essenziali tra le esperienze costruttive rivoluzionarie del mondo politico europeo e il sistema nazionalistico indù' [tries to establish essential points of contact between the constructive revolutionary experience of the European political world and the Hindu nationalist sytem]. Formichi points out how some of Bose's 'riforme etico-sociali applicate al movimento indiano ... s'ispirano ... al Fascismo e al Nazionalsocialismo' [socio-ethical reforms applied to the Indian movement ... had been inspired ... by fascism and national socialism].[49] Indeed, Bose's admiration of Mussolini constituted a new phase of the previous infatuation of Indian nationalism with Mazzini

48 Formichi, *L'Ora dell'India*, p. 10.

49 Formichi, *L'Ora dell'India*, p. 186. Bose sought the help of Mussolini for an Axis declaration of the independence of India. See the diaries of Galeazzo Ciano, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. On 6 June 1941, he wrote: 'I receive Bose, head of the Indian insurgence movement. He would like the Axis to make a declaration on the independence of India, but in Berlin his proposals have been received with a great deal of reserve. Nor must we be compromised especially because the value of this upstart is not clear. Past experience has given rather modest results'. On 14 April 1942, Ciano wrote: 'The Japanese have proposed a tripartite declaration in favour of the independence of India and Arabia. First reactions in Berlin are unfavourable. Japanese suggestions for regions closer and closer to Europe are not welcome. Mussolini, on the other hand, wanted to agree to the proposal immediately'. On 3 May, Ciano wrote: 'In agreement with Berlin, we reply to Tokyo that the moment has not come for the Arab and Indian independence. ... Only if and when the armies of the Axis have reached a point where they can impose the declaration of independence with armed force can they indulge in such a gesture'. On 4 May, Ciano wrote: ' I receive Bose .... He is upset when he learns that the declaration in favour of independence for India has been postponed sine die. He believes that in this way we are playing Japan's game, and that she will act on her own account without considering the interest of the Axis'. Galeazzo Ciano, *Ciano's Diary, 1939–1943*, ed. Malcolm Muggeridge (London: Heinemann, 1947), p. 355, 457, 465.

and the Italian Risorgimento. By the 1940s, the fascists had become aware that Gandhi would never collaborate with Nazi-fascism, so they dropped the rhetoric dealing with the parallels between Mazzini and Gandhi, as well as that about the alleged parallels between fascism and Gandhism, and Bose remained the focus of any link that would be made between Indian nationalism and Italian fascism in the name of anti-British support. It is paradoxical, however, that these alleged anti-racist and cosmopolitan attitudes co-existed with fascism's racial legislation relating to blacks and Jews, which was implemented at home in Italy and in the empire from 1937 to 1941. This racial legislation was, of course, based on the Aryan theory. The legal Aryanisation of Italy was the ultimate fulfilment of the racist potential of Orientalist ideas and occurred in the context of the making of the new fascist 'imperial' man.

The Aryanisation of fascist Italy and the 'New Fascist-Imperial Man'

> Non siamo camiti, semiti o mongoli. E se non siamo nessuna di queste razze, siamo evidentemente Ariani, e siamo venuti dalle alpi, dal nord. Siamo perciò Ariani del puro tipo mediterraneo.
>
> [We are not Hamites, Semites, or Mongols. And if we are none of these races, we are evidently Aryans, and we came from the Alps, from the North. We are therefore Aryans of the pure Mediterranean type.][50]

With the Ethiopian conquest and the proclamation of the Italian empire in May 1936, fascist Italy began a new racist phase based on the Aryan idea. The first event to mark the new phase was 'the 1936 decree on the administration of the empire', which 'definitely ruled out the possibility

50 Mussolini's address at the Fascist Council in October 1938 – 'Le dichiarazioni del gran consiglio', cited in Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 157.

of indigenous subjects obtaining Italian citizenship'.[51] In the same year, Giulio Cogni published *Il razzismo* (1936), the first book of Italian racist propaganda, in which he called for a 'difesa della nostra razza' [defence of our race] that was 'all'ordine del giorno ... di tutta la nostra azione portatrice della luce di Roma nel mondo' [the order of the day of our current action of bringing the light of Rome in the world]. According to Cogni, racism was the doctrine of expansionist Aryanism: 'esso ha portata universale, come esaltazione dei valori più alti della civiltà indoeuropea' [it has the universal task of exalting the highest values of Indo-European civilisation].[52] By 1937, a regime of apartheid was in force in Italian East Africa (comprising Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia). Various decrees had ordered the expropriation of native land, leading to the ghettoisation of Africans whithin the colonial city.[53] Moreover, cinemas, public transport and shops were re-organised according to a regime of segregation.[54] Generally speaking, these decrees ordered Italians to take on attitudes in line with their status as a ruling race, and enforced psychological and physical distance between the rulers and ruled.[55] The decree of 30 December 1937, for instance, established sanctions banning marriage between citizens and subjects with the aim of resolving the problem of mixed-raced children (*meticciato*).[56] By this time, Cogni had published a second racist book, *I valori della stirpe italiana* (1937). A return to the Aryanism is evident in the book. Cogni drew from German

51 Barbara Sorgoni, 'Racist Discourses and Practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism', in Ralph Grillo and Jeff Pratt, eds, *The politics of recognising difference: multiculturalism Italian-style* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 41–57 (41).

52 Cogni, *Il razzismo*, p. v.

53 See Mia Fuller (1996) for an insightful study on fascist urban planning and racial segregation in Addis Ababa.

54 Decrees 12 June, 1 July, 19 July 1937 in Jesi Centro Furio, ed., *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'anti-semitismo fascista* (Bologna: Grafis, 1994).

55 For a detailed account of the attitudes and behaviours that the Italians were required to take on towards the natives according to the racial laws, and of the reasons why Mussolini felt the need to forge the 'New Fascist Man' through this legislation, see Giulia Barrera (2003).

56 Sorgoni, *Parole e corpi*, p. 153.

racial thought, as well as from Italian Orientalists such as Francesco Pullè, to construct the Italian Aryan-Mediterranean type. In Cogni's book, the Nordic and the Mediterranean types are joined together as the 'veri figli dello Spirito, le incarnazioni più divine della Idea creatrice nel mondo europeo' [true children of the Spirit, the most divine embodiment of the Idea, creator of the European world].[57]

1936 was also the year of the alliance between Italy and Germany. After the occupation of Ethiopia and the 1935 Sanctions of the League of Nations, Italy found itself isolated on the world stage. Hitler was keen to side with Italy, and the alliance with Germany also served to counter Italy's isolation. Undoubtedly, the Italo-German alliance played a central role in the fascist racist turn. Since Hitler's seizure of power, Mussolini had looked to Germany with ambivalence. The rise of another fascist power had brought prestige to his ideology. However, it had also threatened to undermine Italy's potential as the leader of that ideological project, given that Nazi Germany quickly surpassed fascist Italy on the world stage. As Nicola Labanca argues, the teacher and pioneer (Mussolini) ran the risk to be overshadowed by the pupil (Hitler) as Nazi foreign policy was overshadowing that of fascist Italy. Mussolini urgently needed a success in foreign policy to maintain his leadership, and the conquest of Ethiopia and the proclamation of the empire seemed perfect for the purpose.[58] In keeping with this logic, the idea of a fascist *imperial* racism seemed like it would be useful in bringing Italy to the forefront of the new order of racist powers. With the fascist-Nazi alliance, the fascists were faced with the problem of race in a new form (which they had criticised in the past), but sought to deal with it in a way that could turn it to their advantage.

The racist turn involved two major projects: one concerned fascist Italy's place in relation to Germany and Europe; and the other the transformation of the 'New Fascist Man'.[59] Up to 1936, the notion of race – even though it involved anti-racism – had already been exploited by Mussolini in his political

57 Cogni, *I valori della stirpe italiana*, pp. 48–9.

58 Nicola Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero: Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia, 1935–6* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005), p. 22.

59 Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, p. 4, and Labanca, *Una guerra per l'impero*, p. 246.

ideology and practice. Human reclamation at this time, although aiming at racial improvement, was based on the notion of harmonious ethnic unity and spiritual bonds rather than separation. On the international stage, this notion had allowed fascism to establish an ideological contrast between itself and both Britain and Germany. However, separational racial totalitarianism in the imperial context, although similarly useful in ideological and political terms, had different dynamics. Human reclamation in the context of racism and empire aimed now to create a *New Imperial Man* by creating an awareness of Italian racial and civilisational superiority over the African subject. At the same time, on the international stage, racism sealed the Italo-German alliance in ideological terms. Furthermore, Germany had no empire, and in this Italy was a step 'ahead' of its ally (and rival). If fascist Italy were to become racist, its racism would be of imperial dimensions, and the fascists would also establish for themselves a primacy in the history of European colonialism. According to Cogni, such primacy was of vital importance. When referring to the racial law implemented in 1937 in the Italian colonies, he wrote that the law was destined to make history:

> Destinata a fare epoca nella storia della colonizzazione, perchè ...sarà la prima del genere... [Q]uest'ordine, che è già in atto, ha messo di colpo l'Italia in prima linea fra i popoli che han cominciato a prendere a cuore le sorti della razza bianca europea.
>
> [Destined to mark a new epoch in the history of colonisation because ... it will be the first of its kind. ... This order, which is already in force, has suddenly placed Italy in the front line among the peoples who have started taking to heart the destinies of the white European race.][60]

Thus, the inclusive rhetoric concerning Nazism and fascism, and the exclusionary rhetoric between Italians and Africans, converged in the idea of a fascist imperial leadership achieved by means of racist ideology and practice.

It can easily be deduced from the content and bibliographies of Cogni's two 'pioneering' books that the alliance with Germany was the starting point for fascist racism. In his *Racism*, Cogni gives an extended account of the foundation of Nazi racism. He quotes from the writings of Houston

60 Cogni, *I valori della stirpe italiana*, p. 136.

Chamberlain, Alfred Rosemberg and Hitler, and brings in the Italo-German alliance while elaborating on the idea of Italian and Roman belonging to the Aryan race, and the notion of Roman and Germanic unity in the Holy Roman empire. The racial narrative of Italo-German inclusion, at this stage, excludes only the Africans, but mentions nothing of Semites. Curiously, Cogni's description of the Jewish Question in Germany is presented with the confidence that the same scenario is unlikely to materialise in Italy, since the Jews there feel very Italian and most of them have been assimilated.[61]

Nazi Aryanism may have given rise to Cogni's Aryanism, but he turned to Italian Orientalism to complete his narrative. In order to return to the original Aryan-Mediterranean idea, however, Cogni first critiques Sergi's Mediterraneanism. As already seen, Sergi believed that the Aryans were barbarians whose only merit had been the imprint their languages had left on the European-Mediterranean languages. Cogni saw this as a flaw in Sergi's theory because in history, Cogni claimed, 'non c'è esempio di lingua imposta da barbari a civilizzati' [there is no example of language imposed by barbarians on to civilised].[62] Hence, the Europeans are Aryans, all Nordic, but of different branches; the Italics and the Italians are of the Aryan-Mediterranean branch. The Italian official source used to demonstrate this was the book analysed above by Francesco Pullè, *Italia. Genti e favelle*.[63] Unlike Nazi racism, though, Cogni's racism remained more spiritual and based on the 'interpretazione profondamente filosofica dei miti e dei popoli' [profoundly philosophical interpretation of myths and peoples].[64] Curiously, if the notion of spirituality had been used in fascist anti-racist rethoric to point to assimitionalism, now it was used to give a specific stamp to fascist Aryan racism.This idea of a fascist spiritual racism distinct from the biological racism of Nazism was developed further by Julius Evola in his discussion of racialism among the Axis powers during the Second World War.[65]

61 Cogni, *Il razzismo*, pp. 157–8.
62 Cogni, *I valori della stirpe italiana*, p. 28.
63 Cogni, *I valori della stirpe italiana*, p. 204.
64 Cogni, *I valori della stirpe italiana*, p. 30.
65 Julius Evola, *Sintesi di dottrina della razza* (Milan: Hoepli, 1941).

In 1938, however, after two years of experimentation in matters of racism, Mussolini completed the racist turn with the institutional Aryanisation of the Italian race and citizenship, and the introduction of anti-Semitism. The *Manifesto della Razza* appeared for the first time in *Il Popolo d'Italia* on 14 July 1938, and was then published in the journal *La difesa della razza* in August 1938. It had been signed by ten scientists carefully chosen by Mussolini, and compiled by the anthropologist Guido Landra according to Mussolini's instructions. Like Cogni, Landra stressed that the Italians were the Mediterranean branch of the Aryan type and had Sergi in mind when he emphasised that the Italian Mediterranean differed from the African Mediterranean. Moreover, Landra fully embraced biological racism, thus suggesting a further step towards Nazi racism. The manifesto was made up of ten chapters, four of which are particularly noteworthy. The headings of these four chapters read as follows: Chapter 3: 'Il concetto di razza è concetto puramente biologico' [The concept of race is a purely biological concept]; Chapter 4: 'La popolazione dell'Italia attuale è nella maggioranza di origine ariana e la sua civiltà ariana' [The population of Italy is of Aryan origins and its civilisation is Aryan]; Chapter 8: 'È necessario fare una netta distinzione fra i Mediterranei d'Europa (Occidentali) da una parte gli Orientali e gli Africani dall'altra' [It is necessary to distinguish between the Mediterranean Europeans (westerners) on one hand, and the Mediterranean Orientals and Africans on the other]; Chapter 9: 'Gli ebrei non appartengono alla razza italiana. Dei semiti che nel corso dei secoli sono approdati sul sacro suolo della nostra Patria nulla in generale è rimasto' [Jews do not belong to the Italian race. Of the Semites who landed on the sacred soil of our Homeland over the centuries nothing has remained].[66] Next to the manifesto was a declaration by the party secretary, Achille Starace, claiming that 'con la creazione dell'Impero la razza italiana è venuta in contatto con alter razze e ogni forma di ibridità e contaminazione deve essere prevenuta. Delle leggi razziali son già in forza … nei territori dell'Impero' [with the creation of the Empire the Italian race has come into contact with other races and every form of hybridity and

66 Ministry of Popular Culture, *Manifesto della Razza*, in *La Difesa della Razza* (1938), 1: 1.

contamination should be prevented. Racial laws are already in force ... in the territory of the Empire].[67]

In November 1938, further laws were implemented, involving the Jews and introducing the Aryan idea of race to define Italian citizenship in the legal discourse. These laws forbade marriages between Italian citizens of Aryan race and people of other races (namely Semites and Hamites).[68] With these laws, the persecution and ghettoisation of Jews in Italy began. This involved their removal from governamental posts, as well as their being barred from education, commerce and most aspects of public life.[69] In 1939, the full Aryanisation of the empire was completed. The Royal Decree of 29 June 1939 incorporated the previous legislation of 1937 and established 'sanzioni penali per la difesa del prestigio della razza in relazione ai nativi dell'Africa Italiana' [penal sanctions for the defence of the prestige of the race in relation to the natives of Italian Africa]. According to this law, the only citizen of Italian East Africa was 'il cittadino metropolitano di razza ariana' [the metropolitan Italian citizen of Aryan race].[70] It followed that other European people of Aryan race would be on a par with Italian citizens. This law was further legitimated by stressing the continuity of Italian colonial racial legislation dating back to the early colonial civil code of Eritrea in the 1910s.[71] In Libya, however, the special Italian citizenship for Muslims continued to exist in order to support fascist pan-Islamism and anti-British propaganda in the Mediterranean and India.[72] In 1938, Ettore Pais published a new book, *Roma: Dall'antico al nuovo impero*, in which he returned to the comparisons between the Roman and British empires first made by James Bryce. In this book, Pais attacks once again British racism in India, and employs the idea of Roman anti-racist assimilation in support of his anti-British propaganda.[73] This

67 Achille Starace, 'Il Partito e il razzismo italiano', in *Difesa della Razza* (1938), 1: 2.
68 Sorgoni, 'Racist Discourses and Practices', p. 52.
69 Jesi Centro Furio, ed., *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'anti-semitismo fascista* (Bologna: Grafis, 1994), p. 299.
70 Mondaini, *La legislazione colonial italiana*, pp. 410, 411.
71 Mondaini, *La legislazione colonial italiana*, pp. 25–6.
72 Mondaini, *La legislazione colonial italiana*, p. 36.
73 Ettore Pais, *Roma: Dall'antico al nuovo impero* (Milan: Hoepli, 1938).

anti-racist rhetoric continued to co-exist opportunistically with imperial and domestic racism well into the Second World War.

Between 1938 and 1941, racist ideology and practice triggered a considerable production of propaganda literature.[74] The Africans, the Jews, and the 'New Fascist-Imperial Man' were the key themes of these narratives. Even the most anti-Semitic of the racist books, such as Telesio Interlandi's *Contra Judeos* (1938), linked racism to the constitution of the empire. In *Contra Judeos*, Interlandi states that the fascist phase of the history of the Italian nation was characterised by a 'rinata volontà d'impero' [reborn will to empire]. Hence the meaning of the legislation on the relationship between Italians and the indigenous people in the territories of the empire.[75] During this period, Mediterraneanists such as Pende or Giacomo Acerbo (1940) reproposed the Mediterranean and Roman idea in spite of Mussolini's Aryan proposal, but their view exerted little influence. It was the ideologue Julius Evola who provided the ultimate Aryan-Mediterranean narrative for Mussolini. Evola's Aryanism focused on the idea of Italian ethnic unity within the nation. Such Italian ethnic unity was important to Mussolini as he was intent on discarding once and for all the idea that the Italians were of two different races (the Aryan in the north and the Mediterranean/Semitic in the south). In Evola's ideology, the Jew was the only Other in Italy, while the African was the Other within the empire. To discriminate against them reinforced the notion of an Italian wholeness and Italian difference from the other races of the empire. According to Evola, when Italians are in contact with their African subjects, they must prevent miscegenation and establish their superiority: 'la conquista dell'impero africano ha portato come naturale conseguenza un nuovo ordine di misure protettive e profilattiche, procedenti da analoghe esigenze e dall'evidente opportunità che, nel contatto con genti inferiori, la gente italiana abbia ben netto il senso delle differenze, della sua dignità e della sua forza' [the conquest of the African empire has brought, as a natural consequence, a new order of protective and prophylactic measures, which proceed from analogous needs and from the evident opportunity that, when in contact with inferior peoples, the

74 See Gillette, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy*.

75 Telesio Interlandi, *Contra Judeos* (Rome and Milan: Tumminelli, 1938), p. 9.

Italian people have a clear sense of difference and of its dignity and force]. For Evola, racism (but also imperialism) is a means to empower the fascist nation, 'perchè il sentirsi della stessa "razza" ... è evidentemente qualcosa di più che sentirsi di una stessa "nazione"' [because to feel a belonging to the same 'race' ... is more than feeling a belonging to the same 'nation'].[76] A racial totalitarianism of imperial dimensions constituted, of course, the most extreme phase of the process of fascist national affirmation. Post-unification Italian Orientalism and anthropology, however, had already made the ground fertile for such developments by cultivating Italian racial and colonial identities through the Aryan idea explored in Part II of this book. Despite the controversial impact of Aryanism in Italy, especially in its interaction with Mediterraneanism, fascist racial legislation eventually fulfilled the racist potential of the Aryan idea. Indeed, Aryanism played dangerously well in the hands of fascism's frustrated desire to empower the Italian nation in Europe and in the world through racial ideology.

76 Evola, *Sintesi di dottrina della razza*, p. 12.

Bibliography

Abdel-Malek, Anouar, 'Orientalism in Crisis' (1963), in Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 47–56.

Abel-Rémusat, P., 'Baron Georges De Meyendorff, *Voyage D'Orenbourg à Boukhara* (Paris: Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Duprè, 1826)', in *Journal Des Savans*, September 1826, pp. 515–27 (515–16).

Acerbi, Giuseppe, 'Il Giaurro di Lord Byron', in eds. Anco Murzio Mutterle and Egidio Bellorini, A. M. Mutterle and E. Bellorini, eds, *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 249–51.

Acerbi, Giuseppe, 'Lord Byron non è romantico', in *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 591–2.

Acerbo, Giacomo, *I fondamenti della dottrina fascista della razza* (Rome: Ministero della Cultura Popolare, Ufficio Razza, 1940).

Andall, Jacqueline, and Duncan, Derek, eds, *Italian Colonialism: Legacy and Memory* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2005).

Ascoli, Isaia Graziadio, *Lezioni di fonologia comparata del sanscrito, del greco e del latino* (Turin: Loescher, 1870).

Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia, *Scritti sulla questione della lingua* (Milan: Silva, 1967).

Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia, *Studj ariosemitici* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1865).

Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia, *Studj Critici*, 2 vols (Rome, Turin, Florence: Loescher, 1861–77).

Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia, *Studj orientali e linguistici* (Milan: Volpato, 1854).

Assagioli, Roberto, 'Per un nuovo umanesimo ariano', in *Leonardo*, year v, 3rd series, April-June 1907, pp. 162–82.

Bacchelli, Riccardo, *Mal d'Africa: Romanzo storico* (Milan: Treves, 1935).

Balbo, Cesare, *Meditazioni storiche* (Turin: Pomba, 1842).

Barberi Squarotti, Giorgio, 'Leopardi e Breme', in C. Pisichedda and N. Nada, eds, *Ludovico di Breme e il programma dei romantici italiani* (Turin: Centro studi piemontesi, 1984), pp. 121–40.

Barrera, Giulia, 'Mussolini's colonial race laws and state-settler relations in Africa Orientale Italiana (1935–41)', in J. Andall, C. Burdett, and D. Duncan, eds, 'Italian Colonialism: Historical Perspectives', Special Issue, *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* 8(3), 2003, pp. 425–43.

Barrili, Anton Giulio, *Il tesoro di Golconda* (Milan: Treves, 1879).

Behdad, Ali, *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 1994).

Belloni-Filippi, Ferdinando, and Formichi, Carlo, *Il pensiero religioso e filosofico dell'India* (Florence: Biblioteca Filosofica, 1912).

Bellorini, E., and A. M. Mutterle, eds, *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)*, 2 vols (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1975).

Ben-Ghiat, Ruth, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2001).

Benvenuti, Giuliana, *Il viaggiatore come autore. L'India nella letteratura italiana del Novecento* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2008).

Berchet, Giovanni, *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo*, ed. A. Galletti (Lanciano: Caraba, 1913).

Berchet, Giovanni, *Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo*, in Carlo Calcaterra, ed., *Manifesti romantici ed altri scriti della polemica classico-romantica* (Turin, UTET, 1979), pp. 422–40.

Berchet, Giovanni, *Sul dramma indiano* La Sacontala: *saggio di Giovanni Berchet* (Milan: V. Ferrario, 1819).

Bernal, Martin, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation*, 2 vols (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987–2006).

Biasutti, Giovanni, *Della filologia comparata e delle sue relazioni con lo studio delle lingue, coll'archeologia, coll'etnologia, colla storia e colla filosofia* (Venice: Naratovish, 1865).

Bigi, Emilio, *La genesi del canto notturno e altri studi sul Leopardi* (Palermo: Manfredi, 1967).

Biondelli, Bernardino, *Studi linguistici* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1856).

Binni, Walter, *Preromanticismo italiano* (Florence: Sansoni, 1985).

Binni, Walter, *La protesta di Leopardi* (Florence: Sansoni, 1967).

Bondanella, Peter, *The Eternal City: Roman Images in the Modern World* (Bloomington: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

Bonelli, Luigi, *Corano* (Milan: Hoepli, 1929).

Bonelli, Luigi, *Lessico italiano-turco* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1939).

Bonelli, Luigi, *Manuale di turco parlato* (Milan: Hoepli, 1910).

Borsieri, Pietro, 'Programma' in *Il Conciliatore: Foglio scientifico-letterario*, Vittore Branca, ed., Year 1, September-December 1818 (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier, 1948).

Bossaglia, Rossana, *Gli orientalisti italiani: cento anni di esotismo* (Venice: Marsilio, 1998).

Brilli, Attilio, *Il viaggio in Oriente* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2009).

Bryce, James, *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India. The Diffusion of Roman and English Law throughout the World* (Oxford: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1914).

Burdett, Charles, *Journeys through Fascism: Italian Travel Writing between the Wars* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007).

Burrini, Gabriele, 'Un sodalizio di poeti: I rapporti tra Édouard Schuré e Angelo De Gubernatis', in M. Taddei and A. Sorrentino, eds, *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, 4 vols (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1995–2001), i, pp. 115–56.

Byron, George Gordon, *The Giaour: A Fragment of a Turkish Tale* (London: John Murray, 1813).

Byron, George Gordon, *Il Giaurro. Frammento di novella turca*, trans. Pellegrino Rossi (Milan: Agnelli, 1818).

Caesar, M., and D'Intino, F., eds, *Zibaldone: The Notebooks of Leopardi* (London: Penguin, 2013).

Caesar, Michael, and Hallamore Caesar, Ann, *Modern Italian Literature* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007).

Caetani, Leone, *Studi di storia orientale*, 3 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1911–14).

Calcaterra, Carlo, ed., *Manifesti romantici e altri scritti della polemica classico-romantica* (Turin: Editrice torinese, 1979).

Calidasa, *Sacontala. Ossia L'anello Fatale*, trans. Luigi Doria (Darmstadt: Dalla Stamperia Stahl, 1815).

Camilletti, Fabio, *Classicism and Romanticism in Italian Literature: Leopardi's Discourse on Romantic Poetry* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).

Carducci, Giosuè, 'All'Aurora', in Manara Valgimigli, ed., *Odi Barbare. Testimonianze, interpretazione, commento* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1959), pp. 11–18.

Carnero, Roberto, *Guido Gozzano esotico* (Anzio: De Rubeis, 1996).

Carr, Helen, 'Modernism and travel (1880–1940)', in *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing*, eds T. Youngs and P. Hulme (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 70–86.

Casanova, Pascale, 'What Is a Dominant Language: Giacomo Leopardi: Theoretician of Linguistic Inequality', in *New Literary History*, vol. 44, no. 3, Summer 2013, pp. 379–99.

Casini, Paolo, *L'antica sapienza italica: cronistoria di un mito* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998).

Castelli, David, *Il Messia secondo gli Ebrei* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1874).

Castelli, David, *Il poema semitico del pessimismo: il libro di Job* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1895).

Castelli, David, *La profezia nella Bibbia* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1882).

Cattaneo, Carlo, *Opere scelte*, 4 vols, ed. Delia Castelnuovo Frigessi (Turin: Einaudi, 1972).

Celli, Andrea, *Dante e l'Oriente: Le fonti islamiche nella storiografia novecentesca* (Rome: Carroci, 2013).
Centro Furio, Jesi, ed., *La menzogna della razza. Documenti e immagini del razzismo e dell'anti-semitismo fascista* (Bologna: Grafis, 1994).
Cerulli, Enrico, 'Il diritto consuetudinario della Somalia settentrionale', in *L'Africa Italiana*, 37, 1918, 120–137.
Cerulli, Enrico, *Etiopi in Palestina. Storia della comunità etiopica di Gerusalemme* (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1943–47).
Cerulli, Enrico, *Etiopia Occidentale (dallo Scioa alla frontiera del Sudan). Note del viaggio* (1927–1928) (Rome: Sindacato italiano Arti Grafiche, 1937).
Cerulli, Enrico, *Studi etiopici* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1935–51).
Ciano, Galeazzo, *Ciano's Diary, 1939–1943*, ed. Malcolm Muggeridge (London: Heinemann, 1947).
Cigliana, Simona, *Futurismo esoterico. Contributi per una storia dell'irrazionalismo italiano tra Otto e Novecento* (Naples: Liguori, 2002).
Cimino, R. M., and Scialpi, F., *India and Italy: Exhibition organized in collaboration with the Archeological Survey of India and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations* (Rome: IsMeo, 1974).
Clerici, Luca, ed., *Scrittori italiani di viaggio 1700–1861* (Milan: Mondadori, 2008).
Clerici, Luca, ed., *Scrittori italiani di viaggio 1861–2000* (Milan: Mondadori, 2013).
Cochran, Peter, ed., *Byron and Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008).
Cogni, Giulio, *Il razzismo* (Paris-Milan: Bocca, 1936).
Cogni, Giulio, *I valori della stirpe italiana* (Milan: Bocca, 1937).
Colombo, Valentina, 'L'Islam filtrato in Leopardi', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente: Atti del convegno internazionale*, ed. Filippo Mignini (Macerata: Assessorato alla cultura provincial di Macerata, 1998), pp. 87–96.
Conti Rossini, Carlo, *Principi di diritto consuetudinario dell'eritrea* (Roma: Unione Editrice, 1916).
Conti Rossini, Carlo, 'Schizzo etnico e storico delle popolazioni eritree', in Fernando Martini, ed., *L'Eritrea economica: Prima serie di conferenze tenute in Firenze sotto gli auspici della Società di studi Geografici e Coloniali* (Novara-Roma: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1913), pp. 61–90.
Conti Rossini, Carlo, *Abissinia* (Rome: Cremonese, 1929).
Conti Rossini, Carlo, *Italia and Etiopia. Dal trattato d'Uccialli alla battaglia di Adua* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1935).
Contorbia, Francesco, 'Serra e Nietzsche', in *Il lettore di provincia* 1.2 (1970), pp. 1–25.
Corradini, Enrico, *Il nazionalismo italiano* (Milan: Treves, 1914).

Corradini, Piero, 'Leopardi di fronte alla civiltà cinese', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente: Atti del Convegno internazionale*, ed. Filippo Mignini (Macerata: Assessorato alla cultura provincial di Macerata, 1998), pp. 191–8.

Costa, Alessandro, *Il Buddha e la sua dottrina* (Turin: Bocca, 1903).

Cotrone, Renata, *Romanticismo italiano: Prospettive critiche e percorsi intellettuali di Breme, Visconti e Scalvini* (Manduria: Lacaita, 1996).

Croce, Benedetto, *European Literature in the Nineteenth-Century* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1924).

Croce, Benedetto, *Storia d'Italia dal 1871 al 1915* (Bari: Laterza, 1977).

Croce, Benedetto, 'Le varie tendenze e armonie e disarmonie di Giosuè Carducci', in *Giosuè Carducci. Studio Critico* (Bari: Laterza, 1961 [1920]).

Cromer, Evelyn, *Ancient and Modern Imperialism* (London: Murray, 1910).

Cudini, Piero, 'Prefazione', in Guido Gozzano, *Un Natale a Ceylon e altri racconti indiani*, ed. P. Cudini (Milan: Garzanti, 1984), pp. 7–39.

Dainotto, Roberto, *Europe (In Theory)* (Durham, NC, and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

D'Annunzio, Gabriele, *Le laudi* (Milan: Treves, 1903–14).

D'Annunzio, Gabriele, *Più che l'amore* (Milan: Treves, 1906).

De Amicis, Edmondo, *Costantinopoli* (Milan: Treves, 1878).

De Amicis, Edmondo, *Cuore* (Milan: Treves, 1886).

De Amicis, Edmondo, *Marocco* (Milan: Treves, 1876).

De Cara, Cesare, *Errori mitologici del Professor A. De Gubernatis: saggio critico* (Prato: Giacchetti, 1883).

De Donno, F., and Srivastava, N., eds, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Italy', Special Issue, *Interventions: International Journal of Post-colonial Studies*, 8.3 (2006).

De Donno, Fabrizio, 'The Gandhian Mazzini: Democratic Nationalism, Self-Rule and Non-violence', in *Giuseppe Mazzini and the Globalization of Democratic Nationalism*, eds E. Biagini and C. Bayly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 375–98.

De Donno, Fabrizio, 'Routes to Modernity: Orientalism and Mediterraneanism in Italian Culture, 1810–1910', in *California Italian Studies*, 1.1 (2010). Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/920809th>.

De Donno, Fabrizio, 'Orientalism and Classicism: The British-Roman Empire of Lord Bryce and His Italian Critics', in C. Bayly and P. F. Bang, eds, *Tributary Empires in Global History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011), pp. 48–73.

De Donno, Fabrizio, '*La razza ario-mediterranea*: Ideas of Race and Citizenship in Colonial and Fascist Italy, 1885–1941', in F. De Donno and Neelam Srivastava, eds, 'Colonial and Postcolonial Italy', Special Issue, *Interventions: International Journal of Post-colonial Studies*, 8.3 (2006), pp. 394–412.

De Felice, Renzo, *Il fascismo e l'Oriente: arabi, ebrei e indiani nella politica di Mussolini* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1989).
De Gobineau, Arthur, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, 4 vols (Paris: Didot Frères, 1853–5).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, 'Cenni sopra alcuni indianisti viventi', *Rivista europea*, 4 (1872), pp. 56–8.
De Gubernatis, Angelo, 'Delle genti e delle lingue ariane', *La Gioventù*, 5, 2 (1864), pp. 105–19.
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Fonti vediche dell'epopea illustrata* (Florence: Fodratti, 1867).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Letture di archeologia indiana* (Milan: Hoepli, 1881).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Letture sopra la mitologia vedica* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1874).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Matériaux pour servir à l'histoire des études orientales en Italie* (Paris: Leroux, 1876).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Max Muller e la mitologia comparata* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1875).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Mitologia comparata* (Milan: Hoepli, 1880).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Peregrinazioni indiane*, 3 vols (Florence: Niccolai, 1886–87).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Roma e l'Oriente nella storia, nella leggenda e nella visione* (Rome: Alighieri, 1899).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Il sanscrito in Europa. Cenni* (Florence: Barbera, 1864).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Storia comparata degli usi nuziali in Italia e presso gli altri popoli indo-europei* (Milan: Treves, 1869).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Storia popolare degli usi funebri indo-europei* (Milan: Treves, 1873).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Storia universale della letteratura*, 18 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1883).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Vita e civiltà vedica (confrontate con la vita degli antichi romani)* (Rome: Forzani, 1906).
De Gubernatis, Angelo, *Zoological Mythology* (London: Trubner, 1872).
De Lorenzo, Giuseppe, *Oriente ed Occidente* (Bari: Laterza, 1931).
De Man, Paul, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).
De Rienzo, Giorgio, 'Le "lettere indiane" di Guido Gozzano', in *L'arte di interpretare: Studi critici offerti a Giovanni Getto*, ed. Istituto di Italianistica, Università di Torino (Cuneo: Arciere, 1984), pp. 683–700.
De Stäel, Germaine, *De la literature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (Paris et Londres: Colburn, 1812 [1800].
De Stäel, Germaine, *De L'Allemagne*, 2 vols (Paris: Nicolle, 1813).
De Stäel, Germaine, *Germany* (London: Murray, 1813).

Deen Shildgen, Brenda, *Dante and the Orient* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002).
Del Boca, Angelo, *Gli italiani in Africa Orientale. La caduta dell'impero* (Bari-Rome: Laterza, 1982).
Della Coletta, Cristina, *World's Fairs Italian Style: The Great Exhibitions in Turin and Their Narratives, 1860–1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006).
Di Benedetto, Arnaldo, ed., *La Geografia immaginaria di Emilio Salgari* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2012)
Di Breme, Lodovico, *Intorno all'ingiustizia di alcuni giudizi letterari italiani* in *Polemiche*, ed. Carlo Calcaterra (Turin: Editrice Torinese, 1928), pp. 3–62.
Di Breme, Lodovico, *Osservazioni*: 'Il Giaurro': *Frammento di novella turca scritto da Lord Byron e recato dall'inglese in versi italiani da Pellegrino Rossi* (Ginevra, 1818), in *Polemiche*, ed. Carlo Calcaterra (Turin: Unione Tipografico-editrice Torinese, 1923), pp. 79–159.
Duff, David, *Romanticism and the Uses of Genre* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
Evola, Julius, *Sintesi di dottrina della razza* (Milan: Hoepli, 1941).
Farinacci, Roberto, 'Gandhi e i suoi critici', *La vita italiana*, 38 (1931), pp. 381–6.
Fawaz, Leila Tarazi, and Bayly, C. A., eds, *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).
Ferrari, Angiola, *La vita imperfetta: Le* Operette morali *di Giacomo Leopardi* (Genova: Marietti, 1991).
Ferrari, Demetrio, *Saggio di interpretazione delle* Odi barbare (Cremona: Fezzi, 1912).
Ferretti, Valdo, 'Cultura e Politica: L'IsMeo durante il regime fascista', in *Storia Contemporanea*, 5 (1986), pp. 779–819.
Figueira, Dorothy Matilda, *Translating the Orient: the Reception of Sakuntala in Nineteenth-century Europe* (Albany: State University New York, 1991).
Flechia, Giovanni, *Grammatica sanscrita* (Turin: Marietti, 1856).
Formichi, Carlo, *Apologia del Buddismo* (Rome: Formiggini, 1923).
Formichi, Carlo, *L'ora dell'India* (Rome: De Carlo, 1942).
Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences* (London-New York: Routledge, 2004 [1970]).
Franklin, Michael J., *Orientalist Jones: Sir William Jones, Poet, Lawyer, and Linguist, 1746–1794* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).
Gabrieli, Francesco, 'Apology for Orientalism' (1965), in A. L. Macfie, ed., *Orientalism: A Reader* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), pp. 79–88.
Gabrieli, Francesco, *Dante e l'Oriente* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1921).
Gabrieli, Francesco, *Orientalisti del Novecento* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1993).

Gabrieli, Giuseppe, 'Una scuola modello di studi orientali pratici e coloniali', *Rivista Coloniale* 1 (1913), pp. 25–48.

Gabrieli, Giuseppe, *Bibliografia degli studi orientalistici in Italia dal 1912 al 1934. Raccolta, con introduzione storica, da G. Gabrieli* (Rome: Società Poligrafica Italiana, 1935).

Gabrielli, Gianluca, 'Un aspetto della politica razzista nell'impero: il "problema dei meticci"', in *Passato e Presente* 41, 1997, pp. 77–105.

Gallotta, Aldo, and Marazzi, Ugo, eds, *La conoscenza dell'Asia e dell'Africa in Italia nei secoli XVIII e XIX*, 6 vols (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1985–9).

Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand, *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings*, ed. A. Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

Garin, Eugenio, *La cultura italiana tra '800 e '900. Studi e ricerche* (Bari: Laterza, 1962).

Germana, Nicholas, *The Anxiety of Autonomy and the Aesthetics of German Orientalism* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2017).

Germana, Nicholas A., *The Orient of Europe: The Mythical Image of India and Competing Images of German National Identity* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).

Gibbon, Edward, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, 6 vols (London: Strahan, 1776–88).

Gibbons, David, 'Philological Cosmopolitanism and European Nationalisms: The Background to Leopardi's Sanskrit References', in P. Cori and F. Camilletti, eds, *Ten Steps: Critical Enquiries on Leopardi* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), pp. 121–45.

Gillette, Aaron, *Racial Theories in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002).

Giuffrida-Ruggieri, Vincenzo, 'Alcuni dati retrospettivi e attuali sulla antropologia della Libia', *Archivio per l'antropologia e la etnologia* 4 (1915), pp. 57–90.

Giuliani Caponetto, Rosetta, *Fascist Hybridities: Representations of Racial Mixing and Diaspora Cultures under Mussolini* (New York: Palgrave, 2015).

Goldman, Robert P., 'Indologies: German and Other', eds D. McGetchin, P. Park and D. SarDesai, *Sanskrit and 'Orientalism': Indology and Comparative Linguistics in Germany, 1750–1958* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2004), pp. 27–40.

Gorresio, Gaspare, 'Prefazione', in *Ramayana: poema sanscrito di Valmici. Traduzione italiana con note dal testo della scuola gaudiana per Gaspare Gorresio*, 12 vols (Paris: Dalla Stamperia Reale, 1847), vi, pp. i–xx.

Gozzano, Guido, *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India*, ed. Franco Maria Ricci (Parma & Milan: La Biblioteca Blu, 1974).

Gozzano, Guido, *Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1913*, ed. G. A. Borghese (Milan: Treves, 1917).

Gozzano, Guido, *La via del rifugio* (Turin: Streglio, 1907).

Gregory, Alla, 'Thomas Moore's Orientalism', in Cochran, ed., *Byron and Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), pp. 177–87.
Griffini, Eugenio, *L'arabo parlato nella Libia* (Milan: Hoepli, 1916).
Grisay, Aletta, 'L'India di Guido Gozzano e quella di Pierre Loti', in *Rassegna della letteratura italiana*, 71 (1967), pp. 417–36.
Guidi, Ignazio, *Le popolazioni delle colonie italiane* (Rome: Bertero, 1913).
Guidi, Michelangelo, *Contributi alla agiografia etiopica* (Rome: Accademia dei Lincei, 1916).
Guidi, Michelangelo, *Roma e il mondo islamico* (Rome: Istituto di Cultura Fascista, 1938).
Guidi, Michelangelo, *Storia della religione dell'Islam* (Turin: UTET, 1936).
Haeckel, Ernst, *Lettere di un viaggiatore nell'India* (Turin: Unione tipografico-editrice, 1892).
Hamilton, Paul, *Historicism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003).
Heyse, Karl Wilhem, *Sistema della scienza delle lingue*, trans. Enrico Leone (Turin: Botta, 1864).
Hugo,Victor, *Les Orientales* (Paris: Hector Bossange, 1829).
Interlandi, Telesio, *Contra Judeos* (Rome and Milan: Tumminelli, 1938).
Irwin, Robert, *Dangerous Knowledge: Orientalism and its Discontents* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2006).
Jones, William, *Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Languages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1772).
Jones, William, *Sacontalā or The Fatal Ring; An Indian Drama by Cālidās* (Calcutta: Cooper, 1789).
Jullian, Camille, *Questions historiques. De l'influence de l'Egypte sur le monde antique* (Paris: Imprimerie de E. Capiomont, n.d.).
Kerbaker, Michele, *La filologia comparata e la filologia classica: prolusione* (Naples: Stamperia del Fibreno, 1875).
Kerbaker, Michele, *Mahabharata, tradotto in ottava rima nei suoi principali episodi* (Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1936–9).
Kerbaker, Michele, 'La poesia del Rig-veda', in *Giornale napoletano di filosofia e lettere, scienze morali e politiche*, vol. 1 (Naples: Perrotti, 1879), pp. 56–93.
Kerbaker, Michele, 'Saggio d'Inni Vedici', in *Giornale Napoletano di filosofia e lettere, scienze morali e politiche*, No. 1, July 1879, pp. 323–53.
Kontje, Todd, *German Orientalisms* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).
Labanca, Nicola, *Una guerra per l'impero: Memorie della campagna d'Etiopia, 1935–6* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2005).
Laven, Mary, *Mission to China: Matteo Ricci and the Jesuit Encounter with the East* (London: Faber and Faber, 2011).

Leask, Nigel, *British Romantic Writers and the East: Anxieties of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).
Leopardi, Giacomo, 'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia', in *Tutte le opere*, ed. W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1969), i, pp. 29–30.
Leopardi, Giacomo, *Canti*, trans. Jonathan Galassi (London: Penguin, 2010).
Leopardi, Giacomo, *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica*, in *Tutte le opere*, ed. W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1969), i, pp. 914–48.
Leopardi, Giacomo, *Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degli italiani*, *Tutte le opere*, ed. W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1969), i, pp. 966–84.
Leopardi, Giacomo, *Moral Tales*, trans. P. Creagh (Manchester: Carcanet New Press, 1983).
Leopardi, Giacomo, *Tutte le opere*, ed. W. Binni, 2 vols (Florence: Sansoni, 1969).
Lew, Joseph, 'The Necessary Orientalist? The Giaour and Nineteenth-Century Imperialist Misogyny', eds Alan Richardson and Sonia Hofkosh, *Romanticism, Race, and Imperial Culture, 1780–1834* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), pp. 173–202.
Li Gotti, Ettore, *G. Berchet: La letteratura e la politica del Risorgimento nazionale, 1783–1851* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1933).
Lignana, Giacomo, *La filologia al secolo XIX* (Naples: Dekten & Rocholl, 1868).
Lignana, Giacomo, *Le transformazionei delle specie e le tre epoche delle lingue e letterature indo-europee. Discorso* (Rome: Loescher, 1871).
Livi, François, *Tra crepuscolarismo e futurismo: Govoni e Palazzeschi* (Milan: Istituto Propaganda Libraria, 1980).
Lombardi-Diop, C. and Romeo, C., eds, *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).
Lombroso, Cesare, *L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne* (Turin-Rome: Roux Editori, 1894).
Lombroso, Cesare, *In Calabria (1862–1897): studi* (Catania: Giannotta Editore, 1898).
Lombroso, Cesare, *L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore: letture su l'origine e le varieta' delle razze umane* (Padova: Sacchetto, 1871).
Lombroso, Cesare, *L'uomo delinquente studiato in rapporto alla antropologia, alla medicina legale ed alle discipline carcerarie* (Milan: Hoepli, 1876).
Long, Andrew C., *Reading Arabia: British Orientalism in the Age of Mass Publication, 1880–1930* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2014).
Loti, Pierre, *L'Inde (sans les Anglais)* (Paris: Calman-Levy, 1903).
Lowe, Lisa, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca, NY, and London: Cornell University Press, 1991).
Lowndes Vicente, Filipa, *Altri orientalismi: l'India a Firenze*, 1860–1900 (Florence: Firenze University Press, 2012).

Lucas, Charles, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912).
Luzzi, Joseph, *Romantic Europe and the Ghost of Italy* (New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 2008).
Lyttleton, Adryan, 'Creating a National Past: History, Myth and Image in the Risorgimento', in A. Ascoli and K. Henneberg, *Making and Remaking Italy: The Cultivation of National Identity around the Risorgimento* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), pp. 27–74.
McGetchin, Douglas T., *Indology, Indomania and Orientalism* (Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2007).
Maggi, Daniele, 'Ancora su Carducci, M. Muller, De Gubernatis', in M. Taddei and A. Sorrentino, eds, *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, 4 vols (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1995), i, pp. 87–114.
Maiello, Amedeo, 'In Search of the Modern Brahmins: De Gubernatis' 1904 Visit to America', in Maurizio Taddei and Antonio Sorrentino, eds, *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 2001), iv, pp. 353–498.
Majeed, Javed, 'Comparativism and references to Rome in British imperial attitudes to India', in C. Edwards, ed., *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 88–109.
Majeed, Javed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill's The History of British India and Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
Mallette, Karla, *European Modernity and the Arab Mediterranean: Towards a New Philology and a Counter-Orientalism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).
Manuel, Frank, *The Broken Staff: Judaism through Christian Eyes* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
Marchand, Suzanne, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire: Scholarship, Religion and Race* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
Marinelli, M., and Andornino, G., eds, *Italy's Encounters with Modern China: Imperial Dreams, Strategic Ambitions* (New York: Palgrave, 2014).
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, *Destruction* (Paris: Vanier, 1904).
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, *Mafarka le futuriste: Roman Africain* (Paris: Sansot, 1909).
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, ed. Luciano De Maria (Milan: Mondadori, 1998).
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso, *Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna*, in *Teoria e invenzione futurista*, ed. L. De Maria (Milan: Mondadori, 1960), pp. 14–26.
Martin Varisco, Daniel, *Reorienting Orientalism: Said and Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

Melchiori, Giorgio, 'The Influence of Byron's Death on Italy', *The Byron Journal* [London], 5: 67–78.
Messling, Markus, 'Philology and Racism: On Historicity in the Sciences of Language and Text', *Annales HSS 67*, no. 1 (January-March 2012), pp. 151–180.
Meyendorff, Baron Georges De, *Voyage D'Orenbourg à Boukhara* (Paris: Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Duprè, 1826).
Meyer, Leo, *Lessico delle radici indo-italo-greche*, trans. D. Pezzi (Turin: Loescher, 1869).
Mojumder, Abu Taher, *Sir William Jones, The Romantics and The Victorians* (Dacca: Begum Zakia Sultana, 1976).
Mondaini, Gennaro, *La legislazione coloniale italiana nel suo sviluppo storico e nel suo stato attuale, 1881–1940* (Milan: Instituto per gli Studi di Politica Internazionale, 1941).
Mondo, Lorenzo, 'Esotismo di Gozzano', in G. Getto, ed., *Da Dante al Novecento* (Milan: Mursia, 1970), pp. 555–68.
Mufti, Amir R., *Forget English! Orientalisms and World Literatures* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016).
Muggeridge, Malcolm, ed., *Ciano's Diary, 1939–1943* (London: Heinemann, 1947).
Müller, Max, *Lectures on the Science of Language delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain* (London: Longman, 1861).
Müller, Max, *Letture sopra la scienza del linguaggio, lette nel R. Istituto della Gran Bretagna nei mesi di aprile, di maggio e di giugno nell'anno 1861*, trans. Gherardo Nerucci (Milan: Daelli, 1864).
Müller, Max, *Quattro lezioni d'introduzione alla scienza delle religioni*, trans. G. Nerucci (Florence: Sansoni, 1874).
Mungello, David, *The Great Encounter: China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).
Mussolini, Benito, *Scritti e discorsi di Benito Mussolini*, 12 vols (Milan: Hoepli, 1934).
Nallino, Carlo Alfonso, *Appunti sulla natura del Califfato in genere e sul presunto 'Califfato ottomano'* (Rome: Ministero Affari Esteri, 1917).
Neilly, Joanna, *E. T. A. Hoffman's Orient* (Oxford: Legenda, 2016).
Niceforo, Alfredo, *I Germani: storia di un'idea e di una "razza"* (Rome: Ed. Periodici, 1917).
Niceforo, Alfredo, *Italiani del Nord e italiani del Sud* (Turin: Bocca, 1901).
Nietzsche, Friedrich, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
Nocentini, Lodovico, *Della lingua cinese come esempio di scrittura universale* (Florence: Regio istituto, 1883).
Nocentini, Lodovico, *L'Europa nell'Estremo Oriente e gli interessi dell'Italia in Cina* (Milan: Hoepli, 1904).

Nocentini, Lodovico, *La ribellione di Mascado e Sumitomo* (Florence: Regio Istituto, 1878).
Nocentini, Lodovico, *Il santo editto di K'an-Hi e l'amplificazione di Yun-Cen* (Florence: Accademia Orientale, 1882).
Olender, Maurice, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).
Pais, Ettore, *Imperialismo romano e politica italiana* (Milan: Hoepli, 1920).
Pais, Ettore, *Roma: Dall'antico al nuovo impero* (Milan: Hoepli, 1938).
Palumbo, Patrizia, ed., *A Place in the Sun: Africa in Italian Colonial Culture from Post-Unification to the Present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003).
Papini, Giovanni, 'Franche spiegazioni (a proposito di rinascenza spirituale e di occultismo)', *Leonardo*, 5 (1907), pp. 129–43.
Papini, Giovanni,'Verso il Buddha Siddarta', in *Leonardo*, year 1, January 1903, number 3.
Pappacena, Enrico, *Arte antica e scienza moderna: esposizione dei capolavori epici e drammatici dell'India antica e breve storia dell'Indologia specialmente di quella italiana* (Carpi: Gualdi, 1934).
Pascoli, Giovanni, 'La proletaria si è mossa', in *La Tribuna*, 27 November 1911.
Pavarini, Stefano, *Carducci* (Palermo: Palumbo, 2003).
Pavolini, Paolo, *Il Buddismo* (Milan: Hoepli, 1898).
Pellegrino, Angelo, *Verso Oriente: Viaggi e letteraura degli scrittori italiani nei paesi orientali (1912–1982)* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani, 1985).
Pende, Nicola, *Bonifica umana e razionale e biologia politica* (Bologna: Cappelli, 1933).
Pezzi, Domenico, *Grammatica storico-comparativa della lingua latina* (Rome: Loescher, 1872).
Pezzi, Francesco, 'Il "Giaurro" di Lord Byron', *Gazzetta di Milano*, January 1818, in Mutterle, ed., *Discussioni e polemiche sul Romanticismo (1816–1826)* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1975), pp. 252–3.
Phillips, Kim M., *Before Orientalism : Asian Peoples and Cultures in European Travel Writing, 1245–1510* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014).
Piromalli, Antonio, *Ideologia e arte in Guido Gozzano* (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1972).
Piromalli, Antonio, *Introduzione a Carducci* (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1988).
Pizzi, Italo, *Islamismo* (Milan: Hoepli, 1903).
Pogliano, Claudio, 'Eugenisti, ma con giudizio', in Alberto Bugio, ed., *Nel nome della razza: Il razzismo nella storia d'Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1999), pp. 423–42.
Pogliano, Claudio, *L'ossessione della razza: Antropologia e genetica nel XX secolo* (Pisa: Edizioni della normale, 2005).
Porcelli, Bruno, *Gozzano. Originalità e plagi* (Bologna: Patron, 1974).
Prager, Debra, *Orienting the Self: The German Literary Encounter with the Eastern Other* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2014).

Prete, A., and Natoli,S., *Dialogo su Leopardi: Natura, poesia, filosofia* (Milan: Mondadori, 1998).
Prete, Antonio, *Il pensiero poetante. Saggio su Leopardi* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1988).
Proglio, Gabriele, *Orientalismi italiani*, 3 vols (Alba: Antares, 2012).
Puini, Carlo, *Il Buddha, Confucio e Lao-tse* (Florence: Loescher, 1878).
Puini, Carlo, *Saggi di storia della religione* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1882).
Pullè, Francesco Lorenzo, *Grammatica sanscrita* (Turin: Loescher, 1883).
Pullè, Francesco Lorenzo, *Italia: Genti e favelle. Disegno antropologico linguistico* (Turin: Bocca, 1927).
Pullè, Francesco Lorenzo, 'Profilo antropologico d'Italia', in *Archivio per la antropologia e la etnologia*, 28 (1898), pp. 19–168.
Pullè, Francesco Lorenzo, *Gli Studi Orientali e la Espansione Coloniale* (Bologna: Azzoguidi, 1914).
Ragusa, Olga, 'Italy/Romantico – Romanticismo', in H. Eichner, ed., *'Romantic' and Its Cognates: The European History of a Word* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1972), pp. 293–340.
Raimondi, Ezio, *Romanticismo italiano* (Milan: Mondadori, 1997).
Rathaus, Ariel, 'Temi ebraici in Leopardi e presenza leopardiana in Israele', in *Leopardi e l'Oriente: Atti del Convegno internazionale*, ed. Filippo Mignini (Macerata: Assessorato alla cultura provincial di Macerata, 1998), pp. 37–52.
Regis, Pamela, *A Natural History of the Romance Novel* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2003).
Renan, Ernest, 'L'avenir religieux des sociétés modernes', in *Oeuvre Complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Clmann-Lévy, 1947 [1868]).
Renfrew, Colin, *Archaeology and Language: The Puzzle of Indo-European Origins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987).
Robecchi, Franco, *Carducci poeta barbaro* (Milan: IULM, 1981).
Robertson, Guglielmo [William], *Ricerche storiche sull'India antica. Sulla cognizione che gli antichi ne avevano, e su i progressi del commercio con questo paese avanti la scoperta del passaggio pel capo di buona speranza di G. Robertson, con note, supplimenti ed illustrazioni di G. D. Romagnosi*, trans. G. Domenico Romagnosi (Florence: Piatti, 1835).
Romagnosi, Gian Domenico, *Dell'indole e dei fattori dell'incivilimento con esempio del suo risorgimento in Italia*, in *Opere di Romagnosi, Cattaneo e Ferrari*, ed. Ernesto Sestan (Milan-Naples: Ricciardi, 1957), pp. 139–290.
Rossi, Ettore, *Documenti sull'origine e lo sviluppo della questione araba* (Rome: Istituto per l'Oriente, 1944)
Rossi, Romualdo, *Mazzini e il Fascismo* (Livorno: Massima editrice, 1931).
Rota, Paolo, *Leopardi e la Bibbia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998).

Sacchi, Giuseppe, 'Della condizione economica, morale e politica degli italiani nei bassi tempi', in *Antichità romantiche d'Italia* (Milan: Stella, 1828).
Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (New York: Penguin, 2003[1978]).
Said, Edward, *Orientalismo*, trans. S. Galli (Turin: Einaudi, 1992).
Sanguineti, Edoardo, *Guido Gozzano. Indagini e letture* (Turin: Einaudi, 1966).
Savoca, Giuseppe, and Tropea, Mario, *Pascoli, Gozzano e i crepuscolari* (Bari: Laterza, 1976).
Scaramucci, Ines, *Narrativa contemporanea e "condizione crepuscolare"* (Milan: Istituto Propaganda Libraria, 1975).
Schleicher, August, *Compendio di grammatica comparativa dello antico indiano, greco ed italico*, trans. Domenico Pezzi (Turin: Loescher, 1869).
Schmidt, Arnold Anthony, *Byron and the Rhetoric of Italian Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2010).
Schneider, Jane, ed., *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country* (Oxford: Berg, 1998).
Schuré, Édouard, *Les Grands Initiés. Esquisse de l'histoire secrète des religions. Rama, Khrisna, Manes, Moisé, Orphée, Pythagore, Platon, Jesus* (Paris: Perrin, 1889).
Schwab, Raymond, *The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680–1880*, trans. Gene Patterson-Black and Victor Reinking (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984 [1950]).
Sergi, Giuseppe, *Africa. Antropologia della stirpe camitica (specie Euroafricana)* (Turin: Bocca, 1897).
Sergi, Giuseppe, *Arii e Italici. Attorno all'Italia preistorica* (Turin: Bocca, 1898).
Sergi, Giuseppe, *Gli Arii in Europa e in Asia. Studio etnografico* (Turin: Bocca, 1903)
Sergi, Giuseppe, *La decadenza delle nazioni latine* (Turin: Bocca, 1900)
Sergi, Giuseppe, *Le degenerazioni umane* (Milan: Dumolard, 1889).
Sergi, Giuseppe, *Italia. Le origini* (Milan-Turin: Bocca, 1919).
Sergi, Giuseppe, *The Mediterranean Race: A Study of the Origins of European Peoples* (London: Walter Scott, 1901).
Sergi Giuseppe, *Origine e diffusione della stirpe mediterranea* (Rome: Dante Alighieri, 1895).
Sharafuddin, Mohammed, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient* (London and New York: Tauris, 1996).
Sitter, Zak, 'William Jones, "Eastern Poetry" and the Problem of Imitation', in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 50, no. 4, Winter 2008, pp. 385–407.
Sofri, Gianni, *Gandhi in Italia* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988).
Solitario, Francesco, 'Angelo De Gubernatis: pioniere dell'orientalistica italiana nell'ottocento', in Grazia Marchianò, ed., *La rinascenza orientale nel pensiero europeo. Pionieri lungo tre secoli* (Pisa and Rome: Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 1996), pp. 165–99.

Somigli, Luca, *Legitimizing the Artist: Manifesto Writing and European Modernism, 1885–1915* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

Somigli, Luca, 'The Mirror of Modernity: Marinetti's Early Criticism between Decadence and "Renaissance Latine"', *Romanic Review* 97.3–4 (2006), 331–52.

Sorgoni, Barbara, 'Italian Anthropology and the Africans', in Patrizia Palumbo, ed., *A Place in the Sun*: *Africa in Italian colonial culture from post-unification to the present* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 62–80.

Sorgoni, Barbara, *Parole e corpi: Antropologia, discorso giuridico e politiche sessuali interraziali nella colonia Eritrea (1890–1941)* (Naples: Liguori, 1998).

Sorgoni, Barbara, 'Racist Discourses and Practices in the Italian Empire under Fascism', in Ralph Grillo and Jeff Pratt, eds, *The politics of recognising difference: multiculturalism Italian-style* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 41–57.

Spackman, Barbara, *Accidental Orientalists: Modern Italian Travelers in Ottoman Lands* (Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 2017)

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Starace, Achille, 'Il Partito e il razzismo italiano', in *Difesa della Razza*, 1938, 1:2.

Stocking, George W., *Victorian Anthropology* (New York and London: Macmillan, 1987).

Stone, Marla, 'A flexible Rome: Fascism and the cult', in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789–1945*, ed. Catherine Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 205–20.

Suali, Luigi, *L'illuminato: la storia del Buddha* (Milan: Treves, 1925)

Suali, Luigi, *Introduzione alla filosofia Indiana* (Pavia: Bizzoni, 1912)

Taddei, Maurizio, 'Angelo De Gubernatis, l'archeologia indiana ed il re Asoka. Una polemica con Giacomo Lignana', in M. Taddei, ed., *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina*, (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1997), ii, pp. 231–292.

Taddei, Maurizio, 'Sulla ispirazione indiana dell'Aurora di Giosue Carducci', in *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1995), ii, pp. 69–86.

Taddei, Maurizio, and Sorrentino, Antonio, eds, *Angelo De Gubernatis: Europa e Oriente nell'Italia umbertina* (Naples: Istituto Universitario Orientale, 1995–2001).

Tarsilio, Berberis, *Il Buddismo esoterico* (Milan: Bellini, 1890).

Taylor, Isaac, *The Origins of the Aryans: An Account of the Prehistoric Ethnology and Civilisation of Europe* (London: Walter Scott, 1889).

Teo, Hsu-Ming, *Desert Passions: Orientalism and Romance Novels* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012).

Tilgher, Adriano, *La filosofia di Leopardi* (Bologna: Boni, 1979).

Timpanaro, Sebastiano, *Classicismo e illuminismo nell'Ottocento italiano* (Pisa: Nistri-Lischi, 1965).

Timpanaro, Sebastiano, 'Giacomo Lignana e i rapporti tra filologia, filolosofia, linguistica e darwinismo nell'Italia del secondo ottocento', *Critica Storica*, 16 (1979), pp. 406–503.

Todorov, Tzvetan, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Tommasello, Giovanna, *L'Africa tra mito e realtà: Storia della letteratura coloniale italiana* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2004).

Trautmann, Thomas R., *Aryans and British India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

Trezza, Gaetano, *Nuovi studi critici* (Verona and Padua: Drucker & Tedeschi, 1881).

Trezza, Gaetano, *Le religioni e la religione* (Verona: Drucker and Tedeschi, 1884).

Trezza, Gaetano, *Studi critici* (Verona and Padua: Drucker & Tedeschi, 1878).

Tucci, Giuseppe, *Indo-Tibetica*, 6 vols (Rome: Reale Accademia D'Italia, 1932–41).

Turchi, Marcello, 'Introduzione', in M. Turchi, ed., *Giovanni Berchet: Opere* (Naples: Rossi, 1972).

Valgimigli, Manara, ed., *Odi Barbare. Testimonianze, interpretazione, commento* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1959).

Valmaggi, Luigi, *Manuale storico-bibliografico di filologia classica* (Turin-Palermo: Clausen, 1894).

Varisco, Daniel Martin, *Reorienting Orientalism: Said and Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007).

Villari, Pasquale, 'La filosofia positiva ed il metodo storico', in *Saggi di Storia, di critica e di politica. Nuovamente raccolti e riveduti dall'autore* (Florence: Cavour, 1868), pp. 1–36.

Warraq, Ibn, *Defending the West: A Critique of Edward Said's* Orientalism (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2007).

Wong, Aliza, *Race and the Nation in Liberal Italy, 1861–1911: Meridionalism, Empire and Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

Wyke, Maria, 'Screening ancient Rome in the new Italy', in *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture, 1789–1945*, ed. Catherine Edwards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 188–204.

Yates, Frances, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979).

Young, Robert, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

Young, Robert, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001).

Zaccaria, Giuseppe, *'Reduce dall'amore e dalla morte': un Gozzano alle soglie del post-moderno* (Novara: Interlinie, 2009).

Zend-Avesta, ouvrage de Zoroastre, trans. Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron (Paris: Tilliard, 1771).

Zuccato, Edoardo, 'The Fortunes of Byron in Italy (1810–70)', in *The Reception of Byron in Europe*, vol. I (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), pp. 80–97.

Zupanov, Ines, G., *Disputed Mission: Jesuit Experiments and Brahmanical Knowledge in Seventeenth-century India* (New Dehli: Oxford University Press, 1999).

Index

Abdel-Malek, Anouar 1
Abel-Rémusat, J. P. 126–28, 127n58 131n63, 32n64
academic Orientalism 7, 17, 142–43, 145, 165
Accademia Pontiana 144
Accademia scientifico-letteraria, Milan 148
Acerbi, Giuseppe 81
Acerbo, Giacomo 322
Adwa, battle of 209
aesthetic nationalism 96, 98
aesthetics 14–15, 24, 48, 54–56, 62, 98, 114n33, 167, 186, 187n17, 88, 219, 223, 245, 257, 258n1, 267–68, 270–71, 275–76, 280
Africa 6n9, 12, 14, 14n28, 18, 69, 107, 152, 202, 206–13, 258, 265, 267, 286, 304, 316, 321
Africa, Horn of 206, 206–13, 286
Agamben, Giorgio 109
'All'Aurora' (Carducci) 18, 177, 188, 219, 242–50, 254
  anti-Catholicism 186, 219, 243
  Aryan-Italian dawn 253
  barbarous meter 244
  Classicism 252
  Hellenism 250, 252
  inspiration 249, 256
  Orientalism 242, 246, 248, 256
  personification of dawn 246
  Roman ideal 243–44, 248, 250
  setting 254–55
  social realism 255
  structure 242
  and Vedism 249–52
Amari, Michele 13n26, 144, 151
ambivalence 6n9, 86, 100, 287, 309, 317
Anglomania 217, 224, 226–27, 285, 287–88, 290
anthropomorphism 114, 187–88, 246, 248, 254
anti-British propaganda 7, 19, 304, 306–7, 321
anti-Catholicism 186, 219, 243–44
anti-historicism 264, 267–68
anti-humanism 129–130
anti-racism 6, 67, 194, 213, 296, 301, 306, 308n31, 310, 317
anti-Semitism 17, 156, 166, 198, 233, 305, 320
Appelius 310
Arabia 5, 211, 220, 314n49
Arabic 1, 8, 9, 13n26, 25, 97–98, 150–51, 208–9
Arabs 70, 99, 119
Aristotle, *Poetics* 73, 79
Aryan historicity 16, 153, 155, 158, 162–63, 165, 171, 173, 176, 179, 187, 226, 242, 245, 249, 251–52, 277–79
  allure of 154
  and Eurocentrism 155
  narratives of progress and degeneration 159
  personification of dawn 246
Aryan homeland 279
Aryan humanism 258, 261–63 268, 273
Aryan Jews 196
Aryan languages 11, 163–64, 168–71, 299
Aryan worldviews 162
Aryanisation 164, 168, 315, 320–21

Aryanism 10–12, 15, 17–18, 37, 139, 143, 149, 150, 153–55, 158–59, 162, 165–66, 179–80, 186, 188, 191, 193, 196, 200, 202, 204–6, 213–14, 217 233, 257–58, 275, 293, 296–97 299, 300–2, 306, 316, 319, 322–23
and Catholicism 163, 181, 186
Classicist rhetoric 186
and European Orientalism 154, 159, 179, 296
fascist Italy 150, 296–97, 301, 315, 317, 318
Nazi 166, 301, 319
Oriental religions and 142, 149, 214
rhetoric of 143, 165, 186, 143
worldviews 158, 162
Aryan-Mediterranean divide 298
Aryan-Mediterranean idea, the 165, 213, 297, 297, 319
Aryan/Semite affinity 198, 230
Aryan–Semitic divide 153, 163, 165, 179, 183, 194, 196, 298
Ascoli, Graziadio Isaia 5, 146 148, 179, 194, 195n38, 297
Studj critici 148, 195n38
Asiatic Society in Calcutta 25
Asiatick Researches: Transactions of the Society 25
Assagioli, Roberto 258, 261
Aurangzeb 233–36

Banerjee, Surendranath 309
Barrili, Anton Giulio 18, 219, 221, 226n10, 227–35, 237, 239–42, 257 278, 281, 285, 293
background 281
Con Garibaldi alle porte di Roma 223
Il tesoro di Golconda 18, 219, 220, 226n10
Orientalist romances 223
production 223
romance Orientalism 223, 235
Bayly, Chris 266
Beckford, William 85
Behdad, Ali 13n27, 280
Belloni-Filippi, Fernando 150, 214–16, 260n3
Benvenuti, Giuliana 15, 272n28, 275
Berchet, Giovanni 4, 16, 44–45, 46n43, 50, 61–62, 64–76, 78, 81, 93, 114, 121–22, 267 293
aims 72
approach to literature and poetry 64
and Classicism 75
concept of the people 63
exile 48, 63–64
Grisostomo 51, 62, 64n3, 65, 66, 71–72, 74–75
Lettera semiseria di Grisostomo al suo figliuolo 51, 62, 64n3
literary project 64
and local colour 58, 65, 69–72, 93
nativism 68
nostalgia 64, 123
Orientalism 67–68
patriotism 54
poetics of passion 54
status 18, 80
Sul dramma indiano La Sacontala: *Saggio* 45–46, 62, 65–76
translations 66, 68
universalism 68
Berghaus, Günter 265n13
Bergson, Henri 264–65, 265n13
Bernal, Martin, *Black Athena* 30
Besant, Annie 215
Biasutti, Giovanni 169, 170n58
Bible, the 99–100, 119, 120n43 141, 150, 160, 173, 179, 214
biblical narratives 159
biblical Orientalism 26
Biblioteca Filosofica, Florence 215, 259–60
Bigi, Emilio 132, 132n65

Binni, Walter 113
biological racism 319,–20
Biondelli, Bernandino 27
Biotypological-Orthegenetical Institute 302
blasphemous Orientalism 180
Blatavsky, Madame 215
Bologna, University of 9, 149
Bonelli, Luigi 151–52
Bopp, Franz 144, 147, 155, 159–60, 169, 171, 295, 296
boredom 118, 135
Borgese, Antonio 273–74
Borgese, Giuseppe 267
Bose, Subhas Chandra 306, 314
Brahmanism 36, 190, 216
Breme, Ludovico Di 4, 16, 46, 51–56, 58, 61, 76–79, 81–84, 88–93, 95, 97, 108–9, 112–14, 125, 188, 293
British Orientalism 27
Britishness 225
Broca, Paul 200
Bryce, James 303–4, 321
Buddhism 19, 141, 150, 162, 185, 190–91, 242, 258, 260–61, 312
Burdett, Charles 7n9, 284, 310
Bürger, Gottfried August 62, 63n1, 65, 68–69, 121
Byron, Lord 13n27, 16, 46, 76, 80, 81n43–44, 86n58, 89
  The Bride of Abydos 87
  The Corsair 81, 87
  The Giaour 46, 53, 61, 76, 79, 81–88, 90–91, 108–9, 112n29, 116
  influence 80
  Romantic Orientalism 85–88, 97, 109
  stereotypes 86

Caesar, Michael 48n48, 64–65
Caffè 48
Calcaterra, Carlo 46n44, 64n3, 78n33, 82n47, 273
Camilletti, Fabio 47, 96n2, 101n9, 109–10
'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia' (Leopardi) 17, 46, 97, 125, 133
  anti-humanism 129–30
  background 125, 136
  close 133, 136
  inspiration 99, 110, 133
  modernity 130, 132, 137
  natural history 127–28, 137
  negative anthropology 97, 127–28
  opening 84
  shepherd's interrogation of nature 110, 124, 133
Carducci, Giosuè 7, 18, 111, 176, 188, 219, 223, 242, 245n19, 249n26, 254n35, 268
  'All'Aurora' 18, 176, 188, 219, 242–50, 254n35
  Classicism 252
  and comparative mythology 242–43, 256
  Odi barbare 244–45, 249n26, 254n35
  position 244
Carlo Alberto, King of Piedmont and Sardinia 40
Carr, Helen 277
Casanova, Pascale 102
Castelli, David 149, 189
Catani, Leone 2
Catholic Church, importance of 49, 179, 180, 186, 189, 190, 243
Catholicism
  and Aryanism 179, 180, 186
  resistance 180
  scientific analysis 183
Cattaneo, Carlo 5, 16, 24n1, 31, 36–39, 44, 61, 179, 194–95, 203, 298
  India antica e moderna 38–39
  Sul principio storico delle lingue europee 37

Cerulli, Enrico 6, 12, 14n29, 152, 206, 212n80,
Ceylon
  Christmas Day in 281–82, 284
  De Gubernatis' description 282
China 8, 151, 214
Christianity 8, 17, 36, 103, 105, 141–42 151, 160, 162–64, 173–75, 179–81, 184–86, 189–90, 192, 260, 262
  Aryanisation 164
  de-Judaised 160, 173
  and paganism 174–75
  survival of 185
  Vedic roots 179, 182, 184, 186
Christmas Day, in Ceylon 281–82, 284
Cigliana, Simona 265
civilisation 5
  Aryan path to 186
  Mediterranean 29, 32, 203, 313,
  middling 103–4
  Semitic 166
civilisational duty 142
classical antiquity
  Aryanisation of 168
  value of 24
classical philology 31, 40, 142, 161, 166–70, 179
Classicism 9, 15–18, 23–24, 27, 28, 30, 34 41–42, 45–49, 59, 74–76, 81, 88, 91–92, 105, 107–8, 110, 115–16, 120, 137, 142, 151, 165, 168, 172, 186, 188, 244–45, 248, 251–52, 262–63, 268, 292
  Aryanism 186, 188
  Carducci 252
  impulse to restore 165
  Leopardi 103–5, 107–8, 115–18, 120–21
  Orientalism versus 23, 34, 74
  prejudice 75–76
  reconciliation with Orientalism 143
  rejection of Orientalism 16
  tradition of 46
Classicist-Romantic quarrel, the 16, 24, 45–46, 48, 52, 75, 77, 78, 80, 82, 93, 95, 98, 137, 188, 248
climate, Oriental nations 70
Cochran, Peter 87–88
Code of Manu 35
Cogni, Giulio 300, 316–20
Colebrooke, Henry Thomas 25
Colletta, Cristina Della 15, 276
Colombo, Valentina 98–99
colonial culture, critical studies 14
colonial expansionism 4 7n9, 45, 206, 219
colonial orientalism 179, 206, 208
colonial philology 211
colonial scholarship 5, 14n29, 141, 207–8
colonialism 6–7n9, 11–12, 14, 16, 44, 142, 151–52, 179, 200n46, 206–8, 266, 281, 285–86, 291, 304, 318
comparative mythology 147, 173–74, 179 181, 242–43, 251, 256
comparative philology 6, 17, 25–26, 30, 37, 67, 101n9, 141, 143–44, 146–49, 153–54, 157–59, 160, 165–70, 173–74, 176, 200, 230, 296
comparative religion 17, 189, 214
Conciliatore 45, 47, 48, 52, 63, 77, 81, 100
constitutionalism 302
Conti Rossini, Carlo 152, 206, 209–13
contradiction, rhetoric of 270
convivenza 31
Coptic Studies 6, 17, 208
Corradini, Enrico 307
Corradini, Piero 98
corruption 38, 78, 92, 103–4, 106–7, 221, 225, 227, 229, 230, 233–37, 240, 242
cosmic pessimism 115, 118
cosmopolitan nationalism 137, 307
cosmopolitanism 4, 12, 61–62, 67–68, 74, 77–78, 101, 195, 217, 266

Cotorbia, Serra's 268
Cotrone, Renata 92, 93n72
craniology 6, 17, 191, 198, 200, 210
creation myths 262
crepuscolarismo movement 258n1, 267, 268n19, 269–71, 275
criminal activity 198–99, 201
Croce, Benedetto 64, 214, 245
Cronin, Richard 80
cultural engagement 2, 7, 9, 23, 112n29
cultural heritage, indigenous 72
cultural identity 9, 242
cultural innovation, Italian 78
cultural pessimism 161
cultural renewal 24
Cuoco, Vincenzo 30

Dainotto, Roberto 13n26, 57, 58
D'Annunzio, Gabriele 6n9, 268
Darwin, Charles 169
Darwinism 268
dawn
  Aryan-Italian 253
  hymn to the 176–77, 249–50
  myth of 242–44, 246, 249–50, 254, 262–64
  personification of 246
  of unification 255
  Vedic 243–44, 246–47, 249–50, 254–55, 264
De Amicis, Edmondo 6–7n9
De Cara, Cesare 180–83
  Errori mitologici del Professor A. De Gubernatis: Saggio critico 180–83
De Gobineau, Arthur 10n21, 154, 161–62, 164, 199n46
De Gubernatis, Angelo 3, 5, 7–12, 18, 42–43, 144–48, 159, 165, 173–77, 179–83, 190–93, 195, 249, 257–58, 271–72, 275, 277–79, 281–82, 285–87, 293, 296
  Fonti vediche dell'epopea illustrata 148n12, 173–75, 192
  Letture sopra la mitologia vedica 148n12, 176–77, 193
  Mitologia comparata 148n12, 165n49, 174, 176n75
  Peregrinazioni indiane 11n22, 18, 275n71, 257, 272, 275, 277, 278, 282n53, 285n60, 286
De Lorenzo, Giuseppe 310–11
De Marchi, Andrea 273
De Pennaforte, Raimondo 8
De Rienzo, Giorgio 272n29, 273
death 16, 80, 84, 88, 105, 122, 118, 120, 122–25, 128, 146, 224, 230, 236, 245, 259, 270, 273
degenerationist narratives 158–59, 160
Delhi 160n34, 291–92
della Coletta, Cristina 15n30, 272, 274, 276–77, 287
democratism 244
desire, illicit 230, 232, 238
destruction, regeneration through 263–64
Di Breme, Ludovico 4–5, 16, 46–47, 50–56, 58, 61, 76–79, 81–84, 88–93, 95, 97, 108–9, 112–14, 125, 188, 293
  aims 82–84
  attitude towards the Orient 84
  background 88
  conception of history 77
  criticism of Classicism 91
  engagement with Byron 81
  The Giaour 79, 83–84 108–9
  idea of *poetic furor* 54
  inspiration 76–77
  Intorno all'ingiustizia di alcuni giudizi letterari italiani 77–78
  Leopardi's response to 16, 108

Osservazioni: 'Il Giaurro'*: Frammento di novella turca scritto da Lord Byron e recato dall'inglese in versi italiani da Pellegrino Rossi* 16, 46, 61, 77–78 82, 88–91, 95
Romantic Orientalism 16, 50–52, 61, 76, 78, 85–88, 97, 113
theorisation of Romanticism 77
Diodorus Siculus 33
discourse 4, 10–12, 16, 18, 23–24, 29, 39, 46, 50, 58–59, 76–78, 93, 96, 98, 105–6, 118, 129, 155, 158, 160, 170, 193, 213, 220, 256, 276–77, 280, 283, 295–97, 307, 316, 321
disillusion 268, 283–84
divine, the 73, 159–60, 164, 177, 179, 188, 191–92, 253
Duff, David 87

education 55n67, 63, 144, 151, 201, 206–7, 228, 321
Egypt 8, 37, 180, 211, 223, 264, 266–67, 305–6
Egyptian philology 168
élan vital 265n13
engagement 23
England 27, 63, 76, 146–47n10, 228, 289, 291, 292, 304
Englishness 224, 227, 290
Eritrea 208–13, 286, 308n31, 316, 321
ethical mission 239–40
ethics 240, 312,
Ethiopia 7n9, 209, 211, 305, 311, 316–17
ethnography 44, 126, 128, 141, 158, 170, 208, 210–11
ethnology 5–6, 15, 17, 25–26, 141, 149, 158, 165, 176, 194–95, 208, 213
Etruscans 29
eugenics 302
Eurafricanism 11–12, 179, 296
Eurocentrism 1–2, 5–6, 6n9, 12, 16, 23, 36, 39, 57, 65, 68–69, 155, 157–58, 275
Euromania 18, 141–43, 153–54, 165, 217, 225–26 277, 281, 285, 288, 290
Europe, North-South divide 57, 59, 200n46
European identity 2, 4–5, 16, 23, 153, 220, 225–26
European Orientalism 1–2, 4–5, 16–17, 23–25, 45, 57, 61, 62, 68, 95, 126, 137, 145, 148n12, 153, 159, 164, 167, 179, 296
birth of 16
reception of 24, 137
European Romanticism 3–4, 61, 98
European Self, the 84, 220
Europeanness 17, 23–24, 26–27, 52, 56–57, 75, 84, 93, 142, 217, 224–26, 283
Evola, Julius 319, 322–23
existentialist Orientalism 17, 136, 271, 292–93

Farinacci, Roberto 310–11
fascism
advent of 142, 151
Orientalist scholarship 6
on race 301–2
fascist Indology 312–13
fascist Italy, engagement with Orientalism 4
fascist Orientalism
anti-racism 301, 306
the Aryan-Mediterranean idea 297
and Indian nationalism 297, 307, 310, 312
new fascist 'imperial' man 315
propaganda and 295, 297
fascist racist propaganda 300
Fawaz, Leila 266
Ferrari, Demetrio 249
Ficino, Marsilio 8, 26
Firdusi 99
First World War 288, 292

Flaiano, Ennio 7n9
Flechia, Giovanni 40, 43–44
Florence 144–45, 148–50, 215, 259
  Biblioteca Filosofica 215, 260
  Istituto di studi superiori e di perfezionamento 17, 144, 149, 150
  Museo di etnologia e antropologia 148
  Museo Indiano 148
Florence University 149
Florentine Indology 12
Formichi, Carlo 6, 150, 214–16, 260, 297, 311–14
Foscolo, Ugo 48–49, 52, 54, 80, 244, 249n26,
Foucault, Michel 11, 155–57, 182, 280
France 14, 23, 27, 29, 41, 49–50, 57, 63, 126, 180, 207
Franklin, Michael J. 56, 73
French language, predominance 102
French Neoclassicism 28
futurism 262–68, 270
  second manifesto 262, 267
futurist Orientalism 258, 264, 267

Gabrieli, Francesco 1–2, 14n29, 152, 153n17, 296
Gabrieli, Giuseppe 153n17, 208n70
Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand 309–12, 315
Garibaldi, Giuseppe 80
Gentile, Giovanni 312
geography, comparative 44
German Orientalism 7–8, 11, 14, 58, 143, 158, 160, 160–61, 187n17, 295
German Romanticism 28, 46n43, 114
Germana, Nicholas 187, 246–47
Germanic prominence 165
Germanic racial superiority 161
Germany
  national identity 28
  Orientalism 27–28
  see also Nazi Germany
Gherardini, Giovanni 52
Giaour, The (Byron) 46, 53, 61, 76, 79, 81–88, 108, 116
  attitudes towards women 86
  depiction of the Orient 55
  opening stanza 88
  Romantic Orientalism 61, 85–88
  stereotypes 86
Gioberti, Vincenzo 30
Giornale della Società asiatica italiana 148
God
  function of 183
  philological dimension 184
  revelations of 189
Goethe, Johann von 68
Goldman, Robert P. 160
Gorresio, Gaspare 3, 5, 24, 39–43, 143
  Ramayana translation 40–42, 96, 188
Gozzano, Guido 7, 14–15, 18, 257–58, 267–68, 270–93
  aesthetic practice 276
  Anglomania 271, 285, 287–88, 290
  anti-historicism 267–68
  anti-realism 268, 271–72
  existentialist Orientalism 292–93
  exoticism 268
  Indian unconscious 258
  inspiration 281
  Orientalism 271, 274
  pessimism 278, 280–82
  'Un Natale a Ceylon' 273n31, 280
  Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914 18, 257, 273n30, 279n48
Gramsci, Antonio 11
Great Britain 307
  British Orientalism 27
  Britishness 225
  imperialism 276, 285, 286, 288, 290–92
  modernity 271

Greece, Ancient 29, 74, 88, 120, 172, 187–88
Greece, Ottoman 5, 88–89
Greek language 25, 303
Greek mythology 42, 186–88, 251, 255–56
Guerrazzi, Domenico 50, 80
Guidi, Ignazio 151
Guidi, Michelangelo 151

Haeckel, Ernst 272, 277
Hallamore, Ann 48n48, 49n51, 64–65
Hamitism 206
happiness, and nature 103, 105
Hebrew 8–9, 56, 98–100, 102, 106, 119–21, 143, 149, 151, 163, 166–68, 170–71, 197
Hebrew culture 99
Hegel, G. W. F. 160, 186–88, 242, 244, 246–47, 277,
Hellenism 249, 252
Herder, Johann Gottfried 23, 26–27, 37, 57–58, 63n1, 68–69, 160
Herodotus 33
Heyse, Karl Wilhem 146–47
hierarchies 17, 56–58, 100, 149, 153, 157–59, 190, 193, 275–76
Hindu myths 174–75, 234
Hinduism 191, 233, 242
historical method 1, 146, 192
historical pessimism 116
history 65, 77, 269–70
  and languages 155–58
  Leopardi's periodisation of 103–8
  and race 161–62
  of religion 183–85
Hitler, Adolf 305–6, 317, 319
Hoffmann, E. T. A. 114
Homer, Iliad 38, 41–42, 82, 96, 100, 110–11, 119–20, 130–31, 188
homesickness 283
Homo eurafricus 202
human reclamation 302, 318
human spirit, the, and language 145–46
humanism 3, 26, 38, 42, 46, 106, 116, 128, 155, 258, 261–63, 268, 273
  Aryan 258, 262–63, 268, 273
humanitarianism 244
Humboldt, Wilhem Von 158

idealism 5, 19, 144–46, 150, 159, 191, 213–16, 258–60, 263, 298
identity 27
  construction 10, 16, 190
  cultural 9, 242
  European 4, 15–16, 23, 153, 220, 224, 226
  German national 28
  hierarchies of 17, 190
  politics 17–18, 24, 155
  racial 4, 7, 15, 18, 142, 153, 217, 256
  religious 190
identity discourses, Indo-Europeism 29
Il tesoro di Golconda (Barrili) 18, 219–20, 226n10
  Aryan India 230
  corruption 233–37, 240
  European community 225
  final image 241
  illicit desire 230, 232 238
  the Laurentis 222, 225, 229, 231, 237–38, 240–42
  Miss Maud 221–22, 224, 226, 228–30, 234, 239–40
  and moral order 237
  narrative 220
  pan-(Indo-)European dimension 27, 76, 154, 208, 229
  protagonists 72
  redemption 234–37
  romance encounter 225, 227
  romance Orientalism 223, 232
  society of Secunderabad 225

themes 222, 224, 240
treasure 225, 229–30, 232, 239
illicit desire 230, 232, 238
imperialism 1, 7, 12, 44, 85, 126–27, 142, 170, 220, 224, 227–28, 233, 256, 266, 275–76, 285, 287–88, 290–92, 303, 305, 307, 323
incivilimento 24, 31–32, 34–36, 38–39, 45
India
anti-British propaganda 19, 306, 321
Aryan 230
British 271, 276, 285–93, 303–4, 313–14
caste system 32, 288, 290–91
celebratory approach 43–44
comparison with ancient Rome 34–36
as the cradle of the world 263, 271, 273
fascism's sympathy towards 305
fascist Indology 312–13
German obsession with 27–29
infrastructure 288–89
irrationalism 289
lack of progress 280
within the Mosaic ethnology 26
Muslim conquest 233–34, 236
mysticism 280
myths of 174
nationalism 297, 307–10, 312–15
nature 70–72
parallels with Italy 310–13
Romagnosi on 32–34
travel writing on 15
value of 24
see also Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914 (Gozzano)
Indian antiquity, European discovery of 3
Indian civilisation 5, 16, 32, 38–39, 74, 150, 161, 168, 186, 275, 296
Indian nationalism 297, 306–7, 309–10, 312–15
Indian poetry 41
Indian unconscious 219, 258
Indic Orientalism 4–5, 15, 18, 31, 38, 74, 76, 219, 234, 257–58, 263, 267–68, 274–75, 277, 285, 288, 293
indigeneity 50, 58, 62–63, 71, 75, 93
indigenous cultural heritage 72
Indo-European civilisation 3, 17, 32, 166, 187, 316
Indo-European concept 5, 10, 17, 23–25, 27, 29–30, 36, 39, 74, 171
Indo-European hypotheses 26
Indo-European kinship, rejection of 212, 278–79
Indo-Europeanism 18, 37, 77
Indo-Europeism, identity discourses 29
Indo-German renaissance 28
Indo-Germanic concept 58
Indo-Italian Institute 312
Indologia 141
Indology 2, 5–6, 9, 12, 16, 18, 24–25, 28, 44–45, 141, 144, 219, 226, 233, 237, 297, 311
emergence in Italy 39–45
fascist 311–15
Indomania 157, 176, 217, 225–26, 278, 282
Indophobia 176, 217, 225–28, 282, 285, 290
intelligence, and race 196–98
Interlandi, Telesio 322
International Congress of Orientalists 148
internationalism 307
irony 37, 118–19, 136, 269–70, 286, 290–1
Islam 8, 46, 77, 85n55, 87–88, 99, 109, 141, 150–51, 162–63 183, 185, 190–91, 208, 211, 234–35, 258, 267
Islamic Orient, the 5
Istituto Coloniale Italiano 209
Istituto di studi superiori e di perfezionamento, Florence 17, 144, 149, 150, 172, 215

Istituto Orientale, Naples 208
Italian East Africa 316, 321
Italian ethnic unity 322
Italian renewal 44, 247
Italian Theosophical Society 215, 259
Italian–Indian relations 285
Italianness 17, 225
Italo-German alliance 317–19
Italo-German inclusion, racial narrative 319
Italo-Turkish war 208
Italy, cultural place 78

Jacobson, Victor 306
Jewish Question, the 319
Jewishness 17
Jews 119, 179, 196–98, 302, 306, 315, 319–22
Jones, Sir William 3, 16, 23, 35n25, 56n69, 101–102, 229, 295, 303
  aims 53
  codification of poetry 53, 58, 69, 77
  Indo-European hypotheses 26
  influence 51, 54, 85, 87
  'On the Poetry of Eastern Nations' 70
  Poems Consisting Chiefly of Translations from the Asiatick Language 53
  poetry translations 46, 53–56, 90–91, 99
  Sakuntala translation 66, 70
  Sanskrit Studies 25
  status 25
  translations 66, 90–91
journals 100, 148, 259, 260, 286
Judaism 8, 141, 143, 162, 164, 189

Kalisada 72
Kerbaker, Michele 5, 146, 148–49, 159, 167, 170, 179, 189, 244, 247, 249–51
knowledge production 155, 183, 277
Koran, the 152, 208
Kultur 28

La voce (journal) 259
Landra, Guido 320
languages
  the Aryan-Mediterranean idea 297
  Aryan-Semitic divide 163, 165
  comparative philology 166–67 169–70
  and ethnology 194–95
  evolutionary theory 170
  hierarchisation 102
  and history 156
  and human spirit 145
  Indo-European 29, 148
  Indo-European hypotheses 26
  linguistic affinities 25
  and national character 26
  origins 194
  and race 203–4, 298–301
Latin 25, 172–73, 195, 298, 303
Latin civilisation 166, 302
Latin degeneration 57–58, 142–43, 159, 162, 165–66, 174
Latin evolution 171
Latin regeneration 205
Latinism 205–6, 301
Latins 29, 161, 162, 165
Latin-Semitic decadence 161
League of Nations, 1935 Sanctions 317
Leask, Nigel 85
Leonardo (journal) 259–61
Leone, Enrico 147
Leopardi, Giacomo 5, 16, 46, 48–49, 52, 56, 62, 77n32, 81–82, 88, 93, 95–137, 176, 188, 244–48, 253–55, 263, 270–71, 281, 292
  'All'Italia' 246, 248
  anti-humanism 130
  and the Bible 99–100
  'Bruto minore' 116
  'Canto notturno di un pastore errante dell'Asia' 17, 46, 97, 99, 110–11, 117, 125–37, 133, 253–54

Classicism 105, 115–16, 120–21
cosmic pessimism 118
Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica 17, 46, 95–97, 107–13, 115
Discorso sopra lo stato presente dei costume degli italiani 105n1
engagement with Byron 81
and Hebrew culture 99
historical pessimism 116
'Cantico del gallo silvestre' 46, 97, 119, 121
imagery 119
Indo-European scepticism 100
interest in Sanskrit 101–2
on Italy 248
Jewish sources 121–22
language skills 98
materialist stance 113
on Mohammed 99
nationalism 106
natural history 127–28
negative anthropology 127–28
negative Orientalism 136
nostalgia 103, 117, 123
Operette morali 97, 117–20
and the Oriental renaissance 98, 100, 107, 119, 122
periodisation of history 105–6
rejection of the Orient 106
response to Di Breme 108
and Romantic Orientalism 17, 88, 113–15, 121–25
state of nature 134
status 98
theory of pleasure 118
'Ultimo canto di Saffo' 117
views on Romanticism 95
Zibaldone 97, 99, 101–2, 106–7, 125, 127–28, 131–32, 132–33
Lettera semiseria (Berchet) 51, 62, 64, 74
Lew, Joseph 112n
liberalism 219
Librairie Orientale De Dondey-Dupré 126
Libya 2, 17, 151, 208, 286, 304, 308n31, 321
Lignana, Giacomo 5, 146, 148–49, 159, 168–69, 179, 196
linguistics, Indo-European hypotheses 26
literary forms 6
literary Orientalism 7, 13–16, 59, 61, 137, 220, 222, 227, 257, 264–65, 271, 278
literary popularisation 221
local colour 58, 65, 69, 69–72, 88, 93
Lombroso, Cesare 6, 146, 179, 191, 196–201
L'antisemitismo e le scienze moderne 198
Luomo delinquente studiato in rapporto alla antropologia, alla medicina legale ed alle discipline carcerarie 199
L'uomo bianco e l'uomo di colore: letture su l'origine e le varietà delle razze umane 197–98
London Treaty, 1915 304
Long, Andrew C. 219
Loti, Pierre 272, 277
Lucian 120–22
Lucini, Gian Pietro 246
Luzzi, Joseph 48n49, 52
Lyttleton, Adrian 49

Macchiavelli, Niccolò 8
Macfie, A. L. 1n1, 2
McGetchin, Douglas 28, 160n34
Maggi, Daniele 192–93, 249
Mahabharata 73, 149
Maiello, Amedeo 9
Majeed, Javeed 303
Malek, Abdel 1–2 296
Mallette, Karla 12–13
Manifesto della Razza 301, 320

Mantegazza, Paolo 148, 200, 272, 277
Manzoni, Alessandro 48, 62, 65
Marchand, Susanne 8, 14, 295
Marco Polo 7
Marinetti, Filippo Tommaso 8, 18, 258, 262–68, 270–71, 274, 293
  futurist Orientalism 258, 264, 267
  Mafarka 265–66
  Uccidiamo il chiaro di luna 262, 264
materialism 214, 259, 261, 268, 280
Mazzini, Giuseppe 80, 174, 243, 307–11, 314–15
Mazzoldi, Angelo 30
medievalism 49, 105, 118
Mediterranean civilisation 13, 29, 32, 203, 313
Mediterranean expansionism 304
Mediterraneanism 11, 15, 179, 200, 205, 297, 213, 299, 301, 319, 323
Messling, Markus 157–58
Meyendorff, Baron M. De 125–29, 131
Meyer, Leo 147
Micali, Giuseppe 30
Middle Ages 34, 49, 58–59, 103, 105
middling civilisation 103–4
Milan, *Accademia scientifico-letteraria* 148
Milanese Romantics 48, 50, 52, 54
miscegenation 162, 220, 303, 316, 322
modern condition, the 129
modern Orientalism 12, 56–58, 125–26, 149, 153
modernisation 4, 109, 180, 219, 221, 245, 262
modernity 4–5, 13–15, 17, 24, 39, 42, 55, 59, 61, 78–79, 84, 95, 97–98, 100, 104, 109, 111, 113, 115–51, 125
  critique of 128, 137, 171
Mohammed, the Prophet 99
Mojumder, Abu Taher 91
monogenism 159
monotheism 163, 185
Montesquieu, Charles, Baron 57–58, 85, 99
moonlight, murder of the 263
Moore, Thomas 56, 87
moral order 237
moral renewal 261
Mosaic ethnology, the 26
Mufti, Aamir R. 56–57, 67–69, 69, 96, 275, 306
Müller, Max 10, 146–48, 153–55, 162–64, 172, 176–77, 181, 183, 186, 192–93, 204, 249
Museo di etnologia e antropologia, Florence 148
Museo Indiano, Florence 148
Mussolini, Benito 1, 301–2, 306–8, 310, 314–17, 320, 322
mysticism 18, 150, 214–15, 221–23, 239–40, 259, 268, 280, 301
mythological mistakes 180
mythology 5, 17, 25, 37, 42–43, 82, 89–92, 112, 114, 117, 119–120, 144, 147–48, 163–65, 173–74, 176–77, 179, 181–82, 186–88, 191–94, 242–44, 251, 255–57, 262, 271,
  comparative 147, 173–74, 179, 181, 242–43, 251, 256
  and race 193

Nallino, Carlo Alfonso 5, 151, 209
Naples, *Istituto Orientale* 208
Naples, University of 149, 180
Napoleonic Kingdom of Italy 31, 48, 63, 77
national character, and languages 26
national consciousness 243, 307
national identity, Germany 28
national rebirth 7, 18, 219
national unification 151, 174, 242
nationalism 2, 4, 9–10, 16–17, 24, 28, 44–45, 48–50, 52, 56, 59, 61–62, 67–70, 72, 75–77, 80, 82–83, 95–96, 98, 101, 106, 137, 186, 195, 256, 266, 268, 276, 297–98, 305–10, 312–15

aesthetic 96, 98
cosmopolitan 137, 307
Indian 297, 306–7, 309–10, 312–15
Italian 44, 62, 137, 307
Leopardi's 106
proletarian 307–8
Romantic 4, 9, 16, 24, 45, 49–50, 59, 61, 69, 72, 75, 77, 82, 95, 96
nativism 68
natural history 25, 44 127–28, 137, 184
natural phenomena 42, 91, 108 112, 163–64, 192
humanisation 42, 108, 112, 188, 246–47, 249
nature 11, 15, 41–42, 53–57, 69–71, 74, 77, 79, 83–84, 89–93, 97–98, 103–106, 108–115, 117–18, 120–21, 123–25, 127–130, 132–35, 145, 156, 158–59, 163–64, 176–77, 183–84, 192–93, 201, 216, 235, 247, 253–55, 267, 282–84
concern with 55
domination of 209
and happiness 131
harmony in 125, 129
Leopardi and 110–13, 114–15, 117
as life 91–92, 108
state of 71, 93, 103, 106, 120, 128, 131–34
Nazi Aryanism 166, 301, 319
Nazi Germany 295–96, 317
negative anthropology 97, 127–28
negative Orientalism 95, 97, 119, 136,
Neilly, Joanna 14, 114
Neoclassical-Romantic Orientalism 5
Neoclassicism 28, 49, 54, 113, 116
neo-idealism 258–59, 298
Nerucci, Gherardo 146–47
new fascist 'imperial' man, the 315
Niceforo, Alfredo 146, 199–200
Niebhur, Bartold Georg 161
Nietzsche, Friedrich 264, 265n13, 268–69
nirvana 220, 223, 237–38, 241, 260–61
Nocentini, Lodovico 151
North-South divide, Europe 57
nostalgia 64, 103, 117, 123, 131, 283–84

Olender, Maurice 26, 163–64
Orient, the 2, 4, 7–9, 11–15, 19, 23–25, 27, 37, 45, 54, 57–59, 61, 68, 70, 77, 79, 84–85, 88, 91–93, 100, 103, 105–9, 111–14, 124, 129, 147, 155, 170, 187, 207, 211, 219–20, 225, 241, 246, 262, 264–67, 275, 293, 306, 313
value of 24
Western domestication of 11
Oriental despotism 86, 187, 227
Oriental nations, climate 70
Oriental renaissance 3–5, 24–27, 32, 34, 36, 52, 68, 76, 96–98, 100, 107, 119, 122
Leopardi and 98
pan-European dimension 27, 76
Romagnosi's rejection 34
Oriental Self, the 84
Oriental Studies 3, 4, 25, 40, 206–7, 295
Oriental tale, the 13, 55–56, 61, 76, 82, 85, 87, 93, 97, 112, 119, 125
Oriental unconscious 219
Orientalist aesthetic 13
Orientalist Congresses 12
Orientalist scholarship 1, 5–6, 11, 13, 19, 125–26, 179, 191, 206–7, 281, 296
Orientalist virtue 237
Orientalist works
emulations 147
translations 146–49
orientalistica 5, 24, 44, 141–45, 151, 153, 174, 208, 211, 214, 258
Oriente Moderno 152
orthogenesis 302
Osservazioni (Di Breme) 46, 61, 82–84, 89–91, 95

aims 82–84
approach to *The Giaour* 61
and Classicism 88–93
engagement with Byron 81
inspiration 76–77
Romantic Orientalism 51, 78, 85–88
theorisation of Romanticism 77, 82
Ottoman Greece 5, 88–89
Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 255

paganism 8, 105, 141–42, 174–75, 185, 191
Pais, Ettore 305, 321
Palestine 305, 306
Palestine question, the 152
pan-Arabism 152, 306, 308
pan-European dimension 16, 27, 76, 154, 208
pantheism 41, 190, 251
Papini, Giovanni 18, 258, 259–62
Paradise, Ceylon as 282
Pascoli, Giovanni 6n9
patetico 77, 89, 92
patria ariana 179
patriotic literature 63
patriotic protest 115
patriotism 54, 298
Pavarini, Stefano 245–46
Pavolini, Giovanni 260
Pavolini, Paolo 146, 150, 191
Pende, Nicola 301–2
Penka, Theodor 200, 205
Peyron, Amedeo 40
Pezzi, Domenico 5, 146–49, 171
Pezzi, Francesco 81
philology
classical 31, 40, 142, 161, 166–70, 179
colonial 211
comparative 5, 17, 25–26, 30, 32, 34, 37, 67, 101, 141, 143–44, 146–49, 153–54, 157–60, 165–70, 173–74, 176, 200, 230, 296
Egyptian 168
and Eurocentrism 1, 16, 155
and God 184–85
Semitic 168
Piromalli, Antonio 243, 245, 268
Pisa, University of 150
Pizzi, Italo 5, 150, 191
pleasure 71, 118, 201, 220
poetic furor 54, 77, 79, 82
poetry, Jones' codification of 53, 69
polygenism 159, 195
polytheism 163, 215, 252
popular novels 6
popularity 9, 85, 222, 249, 269, 273, 275, 280
Portugal 285–86
positivism 5, 17, 43, 144–46, 149–150, 154, 183, 186, 214–16, 223, 242–43, 257–59, 272, 295, 298
crisis of 150, 214
and idealism 216
Prete, Antonio 127, 130
Prezzolini, Giovanni 258, 259
primitivism 27, 61, 79, 103, 127, 130, 258, 265, 267, 271
professional Orientalism 5, 12, 14, 24, 44, 67, 142–43, 148, 182, 186, 207–8, 219, 221, 278, 299–300
progressivist narratives 158
proletarian nationalism 307–8
propaganda 4, 7, 19, 142, 295, 297, 300, 304–7, 311, 313, 316, 321–22
anti-British 19, 304, 306–7 321
anti-racism 311
the Aryan-Mediterranean idea 297
fascist Indology 312–13
fascist Orientalism and 295
fascist racist 300
and Indian nationalism 307
new fascist 'imperial' man 315
Puini, Carlo 5, 146, 149, 151, 159, 179, 183–86, 189, 204, 260
Saggi di storia della religione 183

Pullè, Francesco Lorenzo 5–6, 149, 165–66, 194–95 203, 207–8, 213, 297, 297–301, 317, 319
Pythagorean myth, the 29

Questione della lingua, the 148, 194

race
  equal dignity of 195
  exploitation of 317–18
  fascism on 301
  fixity of 194
  and history 161–62
  and intelligence 196
  and language 203–4, 297–301
  from mythology to 191
  science of 200, 208
race theory, Italian engagement with 296
racial degeneration/regeneration 200
racial difference 201, 304
racial discrimination 295, 308
racial doctrine 19
racial identity 4, 7, 18, 142, 153, 217, 256
racial legislation 6, 149, 315, 321, 323
racial mixing 302
racial narratives 159
racial totalitarianism 318, 323
racialism 4–5, 12, 227, 257, 296, 308, 319
racism 1, 6, 12, 157, 158, 196, 200, 213, 296, 301, 305, 316–323
  biological 319–230
  spiritual 319
Ragusa, Olga 51–52
Ramayana, Gorresio translation 40–42, 144
Rathaus, Ariel 99–100
rationalism 77, 103 280, 289
redemption 83, 221, 225, 234–37, 239
regeneration, through destruction 263–64
Reghini, Arturo 215, 259
Regis, Pamela 223–24, 230, 237, 240
religion
  Aryan 173, 184, 192, 214, 242
  history of 147, 183–84, 215
  science of 17, 147, 149, 177 180, 183, 185–86, 189–191, 214, 249
  scientific analysis 183
  Semitic 184
religious identities 190
Renaissance, the 7, 9, 34, 49, 143, 202, 206, 306
Renan, Ernest 154, 162–64, 176–77, 181, 183–186
Ricci, Matteo 8
Ripa, Matteo 8
Risorgimento, the 4, 5, 9, 15, 16, 23–25, 27, 29, 31, 36, 39–40, 43–50, 58–59, 61, 64, 68–69, 75–78, 80, 83, 93, 96–97, 106, 115, 137, 142, 174, 243, 245, 246, 248, 298, 311, 315
Risorgimento period, engagement with Orientalism 4, 45
Rivista di studi orientali 148
Robertson, William 31–32, 34
Romagnosi, Gian Domenico 5, 16, 24, 31–39, 44, 61, 74
  comparison between ancient India and ancient Rome 34
  Dell'indole e dei fattori dell'incivilimento con esempio del suo risorgimento in Italia 34–35
  on India
  rejection of the Oriental renaissance 34
  translation of Robertson, Guglielmo [William], *Ricerche storiche sull'India antica* 31
Roman ideal, the 243–44, 248, 250
Roman law 35–36
Roman myths 174
Roman progress, rhetoric of 143, 166, 174

Roman rebirth, and national unification 174
Roman-Aryan progress 159
romance fiction 220–21, 240–41
romance Orientalism 221, 223, 232
Romanisation 175, 298
Romantic feeling 112
Romantic nationalism 4, 9, 16, 24, 45, 49–50, 59, 61, 69, 72, 75, 77, 82, 95, 96
Romantic Orientalism 5, 16–7, 45–47, 49–52, 61–62, 76–78, 85–88, 97, 11–15, 121, 123–24, 130, 136
  and the Classicist-Romantic quarrel 47, 52, 77
  introduction in Italy 45–46
  Leopardi 88, 97
  Leopardi's stylistic similarity to 121
  Leopardi's views on 99
  and nature 108, 113
  negative form 46
Romanticism 3–4, 16, 28, 42, 45–46, 48, 51–55, 57, 61–62, 75–77, 81–82, 88, 95, 97–98, 100, 103, 105–107, 109, 113–16, 118–19, 136, 188, 214, 223, 244, 263, 271
  concern with nature 55
  definition 48
  Di Breme's theorisation of 82
  German 28, 46, 114
  introduction in Italy 47–48
  Italy's reception of 61
  legacy 223
  Leopardi's views on 95
  passing of 214
Rome, Ancient 34, 49, 245, 302–3
Rome, declines and rebirths 175
Rome, University of 151
Rossi, Ettore 5, 152
Rossi, Pellegrino 46, 77
Rota, Paolo 119–20
Royal Decree, 29 June 1939 321

Sacchi, Giuseppe 27
sacrality 237, 239
Said, Edward 1–2, 11–15, 155, 157, 207, 275, 278, 286
  Orientalism 1–2, 11–12, 155, 278, 286
Sakuntala 28, 45–46, 52–53, 61–62, 64–66, 69, 72–75, 77, 121
  characters range of emotions 72
  subject matter 73
  translations 28, 45, 52
  see also Sul dramma indiano La Sacontala*: Saggio* [*On the Indian Drama Sakuntala: An Essay*] (Berchet)
Salgari, Emilio 6n9
Sanctis, Francesco De 146
Sanskrit 3, 11, 25, 32, 35, 40–42, 66, 98, 100–2, 144, 146–47, 149, 155–56, 164, 167–68, 170–71, 173, 208, 226, 229, 250, 303
  as European root language 166, 168, 173
  German studies 28
  grammar 40, 43
  linguistic affinities 25
  literature 41–42
satire 118, 122
Savarkar, Damodar 309
Savoca, Giuseppe 269–271, 276
Schiapparelli, Celestino 151
Schlegel, Friedrich 114, 159–60, 295
Schleghel, A. W. 47, 51–52
Schleicher, August 147
Schmidt, Arnold Anthony 80, 82
Schuré, Édouard 146, 265
Schwab, Raymond 2–3, 10, 25–27, 58–59, 161
Second World War 319, 322
secularism 217, 219, 223, 240, 243

Semitic civilisation 166
Semitic degeneration 142, 158, 162
Semitic languages 163, 169, 194–95, 295
Semitic philology 168
Semitic Studies 151, 208
Sergi, Giuseppe 6, 11, 146, 179, 191, 199–206, 209–210, 212–13, 299, 301, 319–20
  Africa: antropologia della stripe camitica (specie Eurafricana) 209
  Arii e Italici 203–4
  La decadenza delle nazioni latine 205
  Le degenerazioni umane 200–1
  Italia. Le origini 203
  The Mediterranean Race 202
Serra, Renato 268–69
Severini, Antelmo 151
Sharafuddin, Mohammed 85
Sicily 199
simultaneity 156, 265
Sinology 6, 11, 146, 179, 191, 199–206, 209–210, 212–13, 299, 301, 319–20
Sitter, Zak 54, 55
social class 201
social Darwininsm 201
Società asiatica italiana 148
Società italiana d'antropologia 200
Sofri, Gianni 310
Solokov, Nahum 306
Somalia 208–12, 308, 316
Southey, Robert 56, 87
Spackman, Barbara 9–10
spiritual racism 319
spiritualism 214–15, 259
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty 28–29
Stäel, Germaine De 47, 50–52, 54–55, 57–58, 62, 77–78, 81, 87, 105
stereotypes 6n9, 86, 276
Stocking, George W. 160, 164, 192
Suez Canal 285–86
Sul dramma indiano La Sacontala*: Saggio* [*On the Indian Drama Sakuntala: An Essay*] (Berchet) 45–46, 65
  and Classicism 74–76
  Grisostomo 62–63, 65, 66–67, 70–71, 74–75
  introductory essay 65–66, 69–76
  on Jones' translations 66–67
  and local colour 69–72
  on love 73–74
  and nature 70–72
  place of India in 67–98
  status 62
  summaries 65
  translations 66
  universalism 65
superstitions 39, 104, 106

Taddei, Maurizio 9, 249
Taylor, Isaac 200
Teo, Hsu-Ming 13, 220, 274
Theosophical Society 191, 258–59
theosophy 191, 215, 259–61, 265
thought, myth and 188
Tibetan mysticism 150
tradition 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 18, 23, 27, 29, 31, 40, 43, 46, 48–49, 53–56, 64–65, 68, 78, 91, 95–97, 103, 107, 112, 118–119, 131, 137, 146–147, 160, 166–67, 172, 175, 180, 197, 212, 219–20, 222, 225, 228, 244–45, 248–49, 251, 262, 265–66, 275, 277, 297
translations 28, 46–7, 51, 53, 55, 63–66, 68, 90–91, 99, 146–49, 151, 260
  Orientalist works 146
Trautmann, Thomas 10, 26, 29, 147, 200
travel writing 6–8, 13, 15, 18, 126, 147, 257, 271–73, 277–78, 281, 284, 286, 310
  dynamics of 284

on India 15
see also Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914 (Gozzano)
Trezza, Gaetano 146, 172–73, 179, 186–90, 204, 214, 240, 244, 251–52
Le religioni e la religione 186, 189
Studi critici 172–73, 186–88
Tropea, Mario 269–271, 276
Tucci, Giuseppe 6, 150, 214, 297, 311–12
Turin Sanskrit School 39
Turin University 149, 167
Turin World Exhibition, 1911 15, 274–75
Turkology 5, 141, 151–52

unification 5, 23, 144, 80, 106, 142, 144, 151, 174–75, 223, 242–43, 255, 298–300, 302, 304–5, 310–12
dawn of 242, 255
universalism 65, 67, 155, 157, 175, 177, 302–3, 305, 308
utopianism 205

Valmaggi, Luigi 167
Vedas, the 164, 173–74, 179, 186–87, 214–16, 230, 247, 258, 275
Vedic Hymns 111, 149, 164, 173–74, 176–77, 249, 251, 262
Vedism 162, 181, 249, 267
significance of 249–52
Versailles, Treaty of 304
Verso la cuna del mondo: lettere dall'India 1912–1914 (Gozzano) 257, 273, 279–280, 282–84, 287–292
aesthetic practice 276
anti-historicism 264, 267–68
anti-realism 268, 271–72, 272–81
Aryan historical pilgrimage 278
and British imperialism 257
dates 272
editing 274
engagement with history 271
exoticism 268
fictitiousness 272–73
inspiration 281
intertextuality 275
'Un Natale a Ceylon' 281
parallels 272
plagiarism 272
publication 273, 288
readership 274, 292
sources 257, 262, 268, 275
themes 268
Vicente, Filipa Lowndes 12, 144
Vico, Giambattista 26, 29, 38–39
Villari, Pasquale 145–46
virtue, Orientalist 233, 237–42
vitalism 265, 287
Volk cultures 68

Weber, Albrecht 144
Westernness 17, 142, 153, 159
Wiezmann, Chajm 306
Wilkins, Charles 25
Wilson, Horace 25, 147
women, attitudes towards 86
World Exhibitions 15, 274–75

Young, Robert 154, 159, 161–62, 209

Zaccaria, Giuseppe 270
Zionism 305–6
Zuccato, Edoardo 80–81

ITALIAN MODERNITIES

Edited by
Pierpaolo Antonello and Robert Gordon,
University of Cambridge

The series aims to publish innovative research on the written, material and visual cultures and intellectual history of modern Italy, from the 19th century to the present day. It is open to a wide variety of different approaches and methodologies, disciplines and interdisciplinary fields: from literary criticism and comparative literature to archival history, from cultural studies to material culture, from film and media studies to art history. It is especially interested in work which articulates aspects of Italy's particular, and in many respects, peculiar, interactions with notions of modernity and postmodernity, broadly understood. It also aims to encourage critical dialogue between new developments in scholarship in Italy and in the English-speaking world.
Proposals are welcome for either single-author monographs or edited collections (in English and/or Italian). Please provide a detailed outline, a sample chapter, and a CV. For further information, contact the series editors, Pierpaolo Antonello (paa25@cam.ac.uk) and Robert Gordon (rscg1@cam.ac.uk).

Vol. 1 Olivia Santovetti: *Digression: A Narrative Strategy in the Italian Novel*. 260 pages, 2007.
ISBN 978-3-03910-550-2

Vol. 2 Julie Dashwood and Margherita Ganeri (eds):
The Risorgimento of Federico De Roberto. 339 pages, 2009.
ISBN 978-3-03911-858-8

Vol. 3 Pierluigi Barrotta and Laura Lepschy with Emma Bond (eds):
Freud and Italian Culture. 252 pages, 2009.
ISBN 978-3-03911-847-2

Vol. 4 Pierpaolo Antonello and Florian Mussgnug (eds): *Postmodern Impegno: Ethics and Commitment in Contemporary Italian Culture*. 354 pages, 2009.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0125-1

Vol. 5 Florian Mussgnug: *The Eloquence of Ghosts: Giorgio Manganelli and the Afterlife of the Avant-Garde*. 257 pages, 2010.
ISBN 978-3-03911-835-9

Vol. 6 Christopher Rundle: *Publishing Translations in Fascist Italy*. 268 pages, 2010.
ISBN 978-3-03911-831-1

Vol. 7 Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan (eds): *National Belongings: Hybridity in Italian Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures*. 251 pages, 2010.
ISBN 978-3-03911-965-3

Vol. 8 Emiliano Perra: *Conflicts of Memory: The Reception of Holocaust Films and TV Programmes in Italy, 1945 to the Present*. 299 pages, 2010.
ISBN 978-3-03911-880-9

Vol. 9 Alan O'Leary: *Tragedia all'italiana: Italian Cinema and Italian Terrorisms, 1970–2010*. 300 pages, 2011.
ISBN 978-3-03911-574-7

Vol. 10 Robert Lumley: *Entering the Frame: Cinema and History in the Films of Yervant Gianikian and Angela Ricci Lucchi*. 228 pages. 2011.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0113-8

Vol. 11 Enrica Maria Ferrara: *Calvino e il teatro: storia di una passione rimossa*. 284 pages, 2011.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0176-3

Vol. 12 Niamh Cullen: *Piero Gobetti's Turin: Modernity, Myth and Memory.* 343 pages, 2011.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0262-3

Vol. 13 Jeffrey T. Schnapp: *Modernitalia.* 338 pages, 2012.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0762-8

Vol. 14 Eleanor Canright Chiari: *Undoing Time: The Cultural Memory of an Italian Prison*. 275 pages, 2012.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0256-2

Vol. 15 Alvise Sforza Tarabochia: *Psychiatry, Subjectivity, Community: Franco Basaglia and Biopolitics*. 226 pages, 2013.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0893-9

Vol. 16 Katharine Mitchell and Helena Sanson (eds): *Women and Gender in Post-Unification Italy: Between Private and Public Spheres*. 282 pages, 2013.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0996-7

Vol. 17 Enrico Cesaretti: *Fictions of Appetite: Alimentary Discourses in Italian Modernist Literature.* 280 pages, 2013.
ISBN 978-30343-0971-4

Vol. 18 Jennifer Burns: *Migrant Imaginaries: Figures in Italian Migration Literature*. 228 pages, 2013.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0986-8

Vol. 19 Donatella Maraschin: *Pasolini: cinema e antropologia.* 306 pages, 2014.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0255-5

Vol. 20 Danielle Hipkins and Roger Pitt (eds): *New Visions of the Child in Italian Cinema*. 356 pages, 2014.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0269-2

Vol. 21 Emma Bond, Guido Bonsaver and Federico Faloppa (eds): *Destination Italy: Representing Migration in Contemporary Media and Narrative*. 479 pages, 2015.
ISBN 978-3-0343-0961-5

Vol. 22 Charlotte Ross: *Eccentricity and Sameness: Discourses on Lesbianism and Desire between Women in Italy, 1860s–1930s*. 318 pages, 2015.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1820-4

Vol. 23 Fabio A. Camilletti and Paola Cori (eds): *Ten Steps: Critical Inquiries on Leopardi*. 330 pages, 2015.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1925-6

Vol. 24 Charles Burdett: *Italy, Islam and the Islamic World: Representations and Reflections, from 9/11 to the Arab Uprisings*. 232 pages, 2016.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1976-8

Vol. 25 Danielle Hipkins: *Italy's Other Women: Gender and Prostitution in Italian Cinema, 1940–1965.* 451 pages, 2016.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1934-8

Vol. 26 Luigi Petrella: *Staging the Fascist War: The Ministry of Popular Culture and Italian Propaganda on the Home Front, 1938–1943.* 266 pages, 2016.
ISBN 978-1-906165-70-3

Vol. 27 Marina Spunta and Jacopo Benci (eds): *Luigi Ghirri and the Photography of Place: Interdisciplinary Perspectives.* 364 pages, 2017.
ISBN 978-3-0343-2226-3

Vol. 28 Pierpaolo Antonello, Matilde Nardelli and Margherita Zanoletti (eds): *Bruno Munari: The Lightness of Art.* 434 pages, 2017.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1937-9

Vol. 29 Fabio Camilletti: *Italia lunare: gli anni Sessanta e l'occulto.* 258 pages, 2018.
ISBN 978-1-78707-462-0

Vol. 30 Sciltian Gastaldi and David Ward (eds): *Era mio padre: Italian Terrorism of the Anni di Piombo in the Postmemorials of Victims' Relatives.* 284 pages, 2018.
ISBN 978-1-78874-326-6

Vol. 31 Patrick McGauley: *Matera 1945-1960: The History of a 'National Disgrace'.* 254 pages, 2018.
ISBN 978-1-78874-357-0

Vol. 32 Federica Mazzara: *Reframing Migration: Lampedusa, Border Spectacle and Aesthetics of Subversion.*
268 pages, 2019.
ISBN 978-3-0343-1884-6

Vol. 33 Fabrizio De Donno: *Italian Orientalism: Nationhood, Cosmopolitanism and the Cultural Politics of Identity.*
376 pages, 2019.
ISBN 978-1-78874-018-0

VOL. 33 **ITALIAN MODERNITIES**

The on-going debate on the legacies of European Orientalism has yet to fully consider its Italian context. This book is a literary and intellectual history both of the reception of European Orientalism in Risorgimento Italy, and of the birth and development of an Italian Orientalist expression in the post-unification and fascist periods. The pan-European phenomenon is approached in its epistemological, aesthetic, anthropological and political dimensions, while focusing on India, Indology and comparative philology as triggers of the so-called 'Oriental Renaissance' and Indo-European or Aryan ideology. The book pays particular attention to some of the major figures of the time. including Giovanni Berchet, Giacomo Leopardi, Giandomenico Romagnosi, Carlo Cattaneo, Graziadio Isaia Ascoli, Angelo De Gubernatis, Giuseppe Sergi, Cesare Lombroso, Giuseppe Tucci, Giosue Carducci and Guido Gozzano. It argues that Orientalism and Aryanism, through an alternation of narratives of 'Orientophilia' and 'Orientophobia', emerge as major if controversial discourses of modernity, race, and religion, central to notions of Italian nationhood, cosmopolitanism and Euromania.

Fabrizio De Donno is Lecturer in Italian and Comparative Literature at Royal Holloway, University of London.

creative commons

www.peterlang.com

ISBN 978-1-78874-018-0